University of Alberta

# CONTEMPORARY VISUAL POETRY IN RUSSIAN AND UKRAINIAN:

## A CRITICAL STUDY

by

TATIANA NAZARENKO ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

Comparative Literature

Department of Comparative Literature, Religion, and Film/Media Studies

Edmonton, Alberta
Spring 1999

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Title of Thesis: Contemporary Visual Poetry in Russian and Ukrainian: A Critical Study

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

Year this Degree Granted: 1999

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January 29, 1999

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **CONTEMPORARY VISUAL POETRY IN RUSSIAN AND UKRAINIAN: A CRITICAL STUDY** submitted by **TATIANA NAZARENKO** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature.

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# CONTEMPORARY VISUAL POETRY IN RUSSIAN AND UKRAINIAN:
# A CRITICAL STUDY

## ABSTRACT

The present dissertation conducts an interdisciplinary genre study of recent visual poetry in Russian and Ukrainian. Due to the fact that visual poetry in either language is being created not only in Eastern Europe but also in expatriate communities in Austria, Germany, France, Canada and the United States, published and unpublished visual texts are studied irrespective of their provenance. A limited number of poetic texts in English and French, and visual poems containing linguistic signs of more than one language (at least one of them being Ukrainian or Russian) are included for the comparative analysis. Therefore, the poetic codes conditioned by social factors and their validity in different contexts are considered for discussion of the broader issue of ethno-aesthetics. The question of cross-cultural influences is not avoided whenever these elucidate structural, semantic and semiotic features.

In the absence of a comprehensive history of either Russian or Ukrainian visual writing, a synoptic overview of the most remarkable achievements of both traditions is provided in the first chapter. This facilitates the comprehension of visual poetry in Russian and Ukrainian being composed today; and both are analyzed in the second and third chapters respectively. In the process of analysis of visual poetry (which typically utilizes the dial sign) the two sets of signifiers and signifieds (one verbal, the other visual) receive close examination. The question of reader's response to verbally minimal texts, organized according to a series of formal conventions, is applied in the light of the reception theory. In the course of the structural analysis, various visual and linguistic techniques are closely examined and wherever possible

compared to the means of pictorial and linguistic resourcefulness utilized by medieval, early-modern and futurist authors. The poetic practice of various schools and individual practitioners is analyzed in depth in the context of the history and aesthetics of the genre. Some aspects of the semiotics and perception of visual poetry (including nondiscursive visual texts) are addressed specifically in the fourth chapter. The appendix includes works of Russian and Ukrainian authors.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following dissertation was supported by the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, which awarded me the Oleh Zujewskyj Research Grant (together with Jars Balan) in 1995 and the Helen Darcovich Doctoral Fellowship in 1998-1999, for which I would like to express my warmest thanks.

I would especially like to thank Jars Balan (MA), whose creative work has triggered my interest in visual poetry which became the object of the present scholarly study. Balan's versatile support was essential at many stages of my research and preparation of the dissertation. I am also deeply indebted to the following visual practitioners who generously provided me with their visual works and granted permission (oral or written) to reproduce these materials in my critical study: Jars Balan (Canada), Vilen Barsky (Germany), Sergei Biriukov (Russia), Dmitrii Bulatov (Russia), Volodymyr Chuprynin (Ukraine), Tetiana Chuprynina (Ukraine), Aleksandr Bubnov (Russia), Olga Dmitrieva (Russia), Brian Dedora (Canada), Nazar Honchar (Ukraine), Liubomyr Hoselko (France), Ivan Iov (Ukraine), Vasyl Karasiov (Ukraine), Mykola Kholodnyi (Ukraine), Myroslav Korol (Ukraine), Rafael Levchin (USA), Ivan Lutchuk (Ukraine), Mykola Luhovyk (Ukraine), Viktor Melnyk (Ukraine), Mykola Miroshnychenko (Ukraine), Elisabeth Mnatsakanova (Austria), Anatolii Moisiienko (Ukraine), Alex Ocheretyansky (USA), Roman Sadlovskyi (Ukraine), Mykola Sarma-Sokolovskyi (Ukraine), Cergei Sigov (Russia-Germany), Aleksandr Sokolov (Russia), Mykola Soroka (Ukraine), Andrew Suknaski (Canada), Aleksandr Surikov (Russia), Anna Tarshis (Russia-Germany), Ihor Tratsch (Germany), Henri Volohonsky (Germany), and Willi Melnikov (Russia). I extend my thanks to Naukova dumka publishing house (Kyiv, Ukraine) for permission to reproduce illustrative materials from monographs of Ukrainian scholars published by the above-mentioned institution, as well as to the editors of the journals *Chernovik* (Alex Ocheretyansky) and *Otrazhenie/Reflection* (Rafael Levchin) for permission to reproduce visual poems published in the above periodicals.

I am especially grateful to the supervisor of my dissertation, Professor E.D. Blodgett (Department of Comparative Studies in Literature, Religion and Film/Media, University of Alberta) for his invaluable assistance and support, and to Professor Dimić from the same Department, for reading the first draft and the final version of my thesis and making valuable suggestions. My dissertation has greatly benefited from careful attention of Professor D.B. Barbour (Department of English, University of Alberta), and Professor Myroslav Shkandrij (Department of German and Slavic Studies, University of Manitoba). I also thank Professor Edward Możejko (Department of Comparative Studies in Literature, Religion and Film/Media, University of Alberta) for his valued advice.

I am also grateful to Professor Andrij Hornjatkevyč (Department of Modern Languages and

Cultural Studies, University of Alberta) for his assistance with Latin and German texts, and to Dr. Wendy Lam for her help in deciphering chemical formulas. My warmest thanks also go to Dr. Serhii Sipko (Department of History, University of ALberta), Barbara Brown (MA), and Robin Hunter (MA) for editing and proofreading individual parts of my dissertations.

I am grateful finally to those individuals who heard one portion of the dissertation or another presented as a paper and who offered their insights during the discussion.

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# INTRODUCTION

Alongside the huge corpus of conventional poetry there exists a substantial body of visual or pattern poetry (identified as "poetry meant to be seen"[1]) practiced in many parts of the world. This genre conjoins literary and visual strategies, and has a rich tradition in many European countries. Contemporary scholarship, however, has not sufficiently addressed the history and aesthetics of the genre, as well as the poetic practice of various schools and individual practitioners. Especially untouched remain numerous theoretical considerations. Among all the contemporary visual poets, the most privileged seem to be Northern Americans and Western Europeans who have much better chances to publicize their creative output. Expressing themselves in English, German or French, they have the possibility to be noticed by critics who speak or understand these languages. At the same time the writing of Slavic authors (especially from the countries where the Cyrillic alphabet is used) has not captured the attention of critics either in the Eastern Slavic countries or in the West. For the latter, the linguistic barriers are, perhaps, the most important consideration. For the former, one major obstacle has been the conservative outlook of scholarship nurtured by Socialist Realist tenets and Soviet ideological constraints on interaction with the West. Although critics have devoted some attention to Ukrainian and Russian visual poetry created in the medieval and the Baroque era, the genre as practiced in the last forty years has been, for the most part, ignored. And yet the texts of this period are the most accessible ones to contemporary readers.

This dissertation conducts an interdisciplinary study of recent visual poetry in Ukrainian and Russian. In both cultures, visual poetry testifies to its obvious success. It is a living tradition presently being created not only in Ukraine and Russia, but also in expatriate communities living in Germany, France, Canada and the United States. Therefore, the poetic codes conditioned by social factors and their validity in different contexts are considered for discussion of the broader issue of ethno-aesthetics. The question of cross-cultural influences is not eschewed whenever these elucidate structural, semantic and semiotic features.

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[1] Bohn, Willard. *The Aesthetics of Visual Poetry: 1914-1928* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 2. In the present study the term "visual poetry" is used in its broad sense covering the whole body of works combining literary and pictorial properties.

The study of Russian and Ukrainian visual poetry is based on published and unpublished texts irrespective of their provenance. In the absence of a comprehensive history of either Russian or Ukrainian visual writing, a synoptic overview of the most remarkable achievements of both traditions is provided in the first chapter. This facilitates the comprehension of visual poetry in Russian and Ukrainian being composed today; and both are analyzed in the second and third chapters respectively. Some aspects of the semiotics and perception of visual poetry are addressed specifically in the fourth chapter. The appendix includes works of Russian and Ukrainian authors, many of which have never been published before. The specific focus on new or totally unknown Ukrainian and Russian material assists the integration of the literary cultures of post-Soviet states into a global process of mutual cultural enrichment.

Inasmuch as this dissertation is the first attempt to bridge the gap in the study of visual poetry as genre, it contributes to genre studies as well. The comparative approach to Ukrainian and Russian visual poetry also fleshes out levels of meaning that can be of use in cultural and anthropological studies.

## TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM

A modified Library of Congress system is used in the present study for transliteration from Russian and Ukrainian into English, which omits designating the soft sign with a comma, but still indicates the hards sign as ". Two Ukrainian letters, е and є, and three Russian, е, ё, and э are transliterated by the same sign 'e'.

All translations from Russian and Ukrainian texts are made by me, unless otherwise indicated.

# CHAPTER 1. EAST SLAVIC TRADITIONS OF VISUAL WRITING

It is difficult to establish exactly when East Slavic visual writing originated, but its introduction was unquestionably connected with the conversion of Kyivan Rus to Christianity. Inasmuch as the Christianization of the Eastern Slavic state was essentially engineered by Byzantium[1], with the acceptance of Christianity as the official religion of the Eastern Slavic land, Constantinople introduced Byzantine education, literature and art to the newly converted neighbour. More than one scholar admits that continuous literary activity in Kyivan Rus began only after the adoption of Christianity in 988. The first group of works which reached the Eastern Slavs were exclusively religious texts.[2] It is not surprising that Byzantine models of calligraphy and ornamentation which were widely used in the layouts of the religious literature, inspired Kyivan authors. The oldest dated monument of East Slavic literature, the *Ostromir Gospel* (1056-7) was richly adorned by variegated floral ornamentation, frames and the sophisticated design of the initial letters. The *Izbornik (Miscellany)* of 1073 – the collection of theological texts, historical essays as well as a treatise on poetics copied from the Bulgarian original for Prince Sviatoslav of Kyiv – apart from the decorative elements contains fragments of shaped texts whose meaning is partially conveyed by the way they look on the page (Fig. 1)[3]. In the *Izbornik* of 1076[4] – a compilation of religious and moral advice for laymen – the technique of figurative tail-pieces of the chapters was used for both practical and artistic purposes (Fig. 2).[5] The same tendency towards rich visual ornamentation is noticeable in other literary monuments of 11th century. Moreover, in the period beginning with the second quarter of the 12th the century the ornamental tradition (verbal as well as visual) was further developed in Kyivan writing. As Dmytro Chyzhevskyi observes,

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[1] Zhukovsky, A. "Volodymyr the Great," *Encyclopedia of Ukraine.* Vol. 5. Danylo Husar Struk, ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 643.

[2] Translations from Holy Scriptures were made by the Southern Slavic missionaries Cyril and Methodius.

[3] Cherepnin, L.V. *Russkaia paleographiia* (Moscow: Gosydarstvennoe izdatelstvo politicheskoi literatury, 1956). Fig. 21, n.pag.

[4] According to some scholars (most notably O. Biletskyi) the collection also contains original texts and one of the contributors might be the Metropolitan Ilarion, the first Kyivan (not Greek) Metropolitan and the author of the well-known *Sermon on Law and Grace.* See: Biletskyi, O.I. *Khrestomatiia davnoi ukrainskoi literatury: do kintsia XYIII st.* (Kyiv: Radianska shkola, 1967), 9.

[5] Biletskyi, O.I. *Khrestomatiia davnoi ukrainskoi literatury: do kintsia XYIII st.*, 11.

> ...the 11th and the beginning of the 12th century were in Byzantium and in the West a period of transition to the "highly ornate" and "amplified" style. This process of transition took place both in Byzantine literature and in the Latin literature of Western Europe, as well as in the national languages where such already existed. This literary transition among the eastern Slavs merely proves that the Eastern Slavs were part of the all-European world of letters and underwent the same processes. Important influences from the West were possible among the Eastern Slavs mainly through Byzantine mediation.[6]

In his study of early Slavic literature Chyzhevskyi pays attention primarily to the variety of ornamental adornments in style and the complexity of East Slavic literature of the 11th-13th centuries. As he remarks, a profuse and consistent application of artistic devices and symbolic imagery (especially when symbols are used exclusively for the purpose of stylistic ornamentation) often conceals "entirely the leading thought of the work[7]." The same tendency towards more complicated visual make-up was one of the characteristics of early East Slavic manuscripts, lavishly adorned with coloured illuminations, highly decorative frontispieces, tail-pieces and initial letters of each chapter or section, etc. The period of the 11th-12th centuries is rightfully considered to be the Golden age of the Kyivan Rus literature, when the most valuable works of the Eastern Slavic medieval legacy were created. It is also a time when the art of manuscript ornamentation was highly developed and the traditions of the manuscript layout and decoration were set. These traditions, as well as the influence of the Kyivan literary school in a broad sense, were quite noticeable in the new cultural centres of Southern and later Northern Rus of the following centuries, even at the time, when the cultural expansion of Kyiv gradually decreased and finally came to an end. Thus, giving an account on the Old Slavic page lay-out the well-known Russian palaeographer Karskii refers to several postscripts in the form of a circle or a funnel in the Russian manuscripts of the 15th century. Further he states that in the 16th century this way of writing was transferred to the first printed books[8] (Fig. 3).[9] However, the same funnel-like ending appeared for the first time (or at least was documented) in the Kyivan *Izbornik (Miscellany)* of 1076[10] (Fig. 4).[11]

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[6] Čiževskij, Dmitrij. *History of Russian Literature: From the Eleventh Century To the End of the Baroque* (The Hague: Mouton & Co, 1962), 85.

[7] Čiževskij, 82.

The Kyivan manuscript ornamentation was established according to two principle styles: the geometrical one, borrowed from Byzantium and widely used in the 11th-12th centuries and the teratological (concerned with the depiction of monsters and other fantastic creatures), which was most probably adopted from Bulgaria and flourished from the second part of the 13th up to the 15th century. The conversion from the geometrical to the teratological style was prepared by the kind of transitional style or manner known as "barbaric". This manner was geometrical in its nature, although its elements were visibly distorted and decorated by faunal patterns instead of floral ones. As a rule, the calligraphers from Kyiv and Novgorod imitated the elaborate Byzantine style with a high degree of accuracy and skilfullness, while the provincial scribers and draughtsmen in most cases could not understand the details of Byzantine ornamentation and thus simplified and mixed them with their own ethnic motifs in the process of copying.[12] The motif of the "living creature" – whether a bird, a snake, an animal or a human being – was the dominant one in the "barbaric" manner. Later this tendency was developed by the teratological style, where the initial not only freed the motif of the "living creature" but also "gave it an independent meaning by turning it into a kind of miniature, which in most cases could not be easily recognized as a definite letter.[13] It is interesting that this approach to the typesetting – created to be seen rather than read – was revived in its anthropomorphic variant by contemporary visual poets, primarily concerned with the visual dimensions of letters.

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[8] Karskii, E.F. *Slavianskaia kirillovskaia paleografiia* (Moscow: Nauka, 1979), 244, 246.

[9] Azbuka Ivana Fedorova: 1578 (Moscow: Kniga, 1983), 12.

[10] Karskii, 156.

[11] Karskii, 244.

[12] Shchepkin, V.N. *Russkaia paleografiia* (Moscow: Nauka, 1967), 63-65.

[13] Shchepkin, 66.

If initials were created as a separate composition or miniature, standing apart from the body of the text, other decorative elements (multicolored drawings, ornamentations, illuminations, etc.) were often indented into the text and even interfered with the discourse itself. In any case, the specific lay-out of the early East Slavic manuscripts considerably influenced the reader's perception of the text as an integral part of the whole body of the work. Together with the highly elevated style of the time, it represented "the world in considerably more vivid colours, with stress on its luxury, riches, colours, and gold". . .[14] in both a literal and figurative sense.

It is noteworthy that Byzantine ornamental tradition also influenced the way in which graffiti were shaped and arranged in the interiors (and to a lesser extent in exteriors, where graffiti in most cases have not survived) of the architectural monuments of the 11-13th centuries. The richest collection of graffiti (416 inscriptions) is preserved in St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv, which was erected at the height of Kyivan Rus's power under the rein of Prince Iaroslav the Wise in 1037. The cathedral was built in the Byzantine style with some features borrowed from the Hagia Sophia of Constantinople. Among other monuments notable for their epigraphical findings from that period are the Golden Gates and the Monastery of Vydubychy in Kyiv (both built in the 11th century), churches and edifices above catacombs as well as in caves of the 11th century Kyivan Cave Monastery (*Kyevo-Pecherska Lavra*), the 12th century Church of St. Cyril in Kyiv and 11th century St. Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod.[15] The messages conveyed by the graffiti deal with both religious (mostly supplications to God and saints) and secular matters; the latter form only a small part of the

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[14] Čiževskij, Dmitrij. *History of Russian Literature: From the Eleventh Century to the End of the Baroque*, 85.

[15] Novgorod the Great was a city-state in northern Rus from the 12th to 15th century. It was established by Slavs who had migrated to the north from the middle Dnieper basin and the Kyivan Rus in particular. Despite the local opposition to Kyivan rule both cities had strong economic and cultural ties. Kyiv's architecture was copied in Novgorod as it most evident in the similarity of the St. Sophia Cathedrals in the two cities. According to some scholars the style of the Novgorod chronicles also displays obvious Kyivan influence.

Kyivan epigraphic legacy, as they were persistently destroyed by the clergy for reasons of censorship.[16] Their shape and spatial arrangement as well as the make-up and size of letters vary considerably, thus attracting the eye by visual form in addition to the message itself[17]. Some medieval inscriptions and drawings strike one by their refined technique and apparent artistic qualities[18] (Fig. 5).[19] Quite a number of letters resemble the style characteristic of the Medieval Slavic manuscripts with letters lavishly adorned by floral or faunal patterns or even anthropomorphized signs.[20] Medieval Kyivan graffiti not infrequently have an enigmatic nature, like an unusual alphabet found in the apse of the St. Michael side-altar of St. Sophia Cathedral. The 11th-century graffito consists of 23 letters of the Greek alphabet (only Ψ is absent) and four Slavic letters, namely Б, Ж, Ш and Щ. This alphabet is often described as an unsuccessful attempt to present the succession of Cyrillic letters by somebody lacking the experience of writing in Cyrillic[21]. However, according to Vysotskii the alphabet most probably reflects a certain phase in the formation of the Cyrillic written language from the Byzantine and Greek.[22]

Some of the graffiti in the St. Sophia Cathedral are framed (Fig. 6),[23] others are decorated with a cross (Fig. 7),[24] monograms of Jesus Christ, praying hands, artistically done images of prelates or saints and symbolic signs as well as less frequent drawings of warriors, birds and animals. Thus, one of the inscriptions on the north-east corner pillar is accompanied by a drawing of a large bird, most likely a crane or a great bustard, although the correlation between the text (only partially deciphered) and the drawing itself is not quite clear[25] (Fig. 8).[26] The appreciation of ancient feats of valour is reflected in several figures of warriors with the appropriate inscriptions. Some of the drawings are developed in detailed compositions with symbolical meaning, as the one in the apse of the St. Michael side-altar, representing a militant looking warrior fighting the snake, which typically stands for the devil in Christian lore,[27] and for an enemy in Old Slavic folklore (Fig. 9). Due to the fact that the composition is located in one of the altars, where only the priesthood had access, it is possible to suggest that the triumphant victory of the warrior most likely symbolizes the victory of Christianity over paganism[28]. The partially preserved inscription implicitly suggests the same, as it refers to a sinner who is probably pagan; however, by no means can it be considered as a title of the drawing. Most likely the verbal element duplicates the message conveyed by the visual image, which was characteristic of ancient South and Eastern Slavic writing. As E. Karskii argues, this way of representation testifies to close ties between the drawing and its inscription.[29] The authors of graffiti also included in their range of subjects several genre scenes (punishment of the criminal, the prancing horse as well as geometrical ornaments, the latter often resembling labyrinths). Unfortunately, it impossible to decode the accompanying verbal messages, which havebeen badly preserved.

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[16] Medyntseva, A.A. *Drevnerusskie nadpisi novgorodskogo Sofiiskogo sobora* (Moscow: Nauka, 1977), 149.

[17] A detailed analysis of the ancient and Medieval Kyiv and Novgorod graffiti is given in the following books: Vysotskii, S. *Drevnerusskiie nadpisi Sofii Kievskoi XI-XIV vv.* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1966); Vysotskii, S. *Srednevekovye nadpisi Sofii Kievskoi* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1976); Medyntseva, A. *Drevnerusskie nadpisi Novhorodskogo Sofievskogo Sobora XI-XIY veka*; Vysotskii, S. *Kievskii graffiti XI-XVII vv* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1985).

[18] Vysotskii, S. *Kievskie graffiti XI-XVII vv.*, 64.

[19] Vysotskii, S. Tabl. XXXIII, n. pag.

[20] Vysotskii, S. *Srednevekovye nadpisi Sofii Kievskoi*, 50.

[21] Ivanova, T.A. "Ob azbuke na stene Sofiiskogo sobora," *Voprosy iazykoznaniia* 3 (1972), 118-22.

[22] Vysotskii, S. *Srednevekovye nadpisi Sofii Kievskoi*, 16-23.

[23] Vysotskii, S., 315.

[24] Vysotskii, S., 373,

Besides being written in two alphabets, the Glagolitic and the Cyrillic, Kyivan graffiti vary in their letter style, arrangement and layout. Although most commonly the inscriptions are horizontally arranged, there are several instances of vertical arrangement (Fig. 10).[30] Some inscriptions are written in large double-lined letters, typically used for illuminations or other important sections of manuscripts (Fig. 11).[31] This was done in order to decorate the text, as well as to attract the attention of visitors. [32]

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[25] Vysotskii, S., 128-29.

[26] Vysotskii, S. 435.

[27] See: *The New Testament*, Rev. 12:7-9.

[28] Vysotskii, S. *Srednevekovye nadpisi Sofii Kievskoi*, 126, 426-27.

[29] Karskii, E.F. *Slavianskaia kirillovskaia paleografiia*, 140.

[30] Vysotskii, S.A., *Srednevekovye nadpisi Sofii kievskoi*, 321.

The archeological research in St. Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod revealed several striking inscriptions as well. On the south side of the vestry there is a graffito from the turn of the 13th century, which is inserted between the spurs of the Kyiv prince's trident[33] (Fig. 12). Another interesting example is the 12th-century inscription inside the cross with the mutually perpendicular arrangement of words (Fig. 13). Horizontally it reads "To the Saviour," but the meaning of the whole inscription remains obscure.[34] Several inscriptions of the 11th and 12th centuries are written in reverse order,[35] (Fig. 14), although the paleographers who reported and documented them do not refer to them as a type of word-play. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the authors of the graffiti (whether the clergy or laymen) were concerned with both the verbal component of the message and its visual dimension.

As we can see, visual writing was not alien to the ancient Eastern Slavic culture. But in spite of this, we have no record of any original Eastern Slavic visual poetry of the period, not even examples of acrostics, which were common in Byzantium and to a certain extent in the South Slavic literatures. According to Karskii, Greek acrostics were resistant to translation into Old Church Slavonic and thus the first acrostic in Russian written by Pakhomii the Serb appeared no earlier than in the 15th century[36]. Another Russian researcher Berkov has pointed out that the acrostic was quite a popular poetic device developed by the Eastern Slavs[37] but did not give any example. The American expert in visual poetry Dick Higgins doubts the ability of Byzantine culture (the primary influence on Kyivan literature) to develop visual poetry as a specific poetic form. In his opinion, the formally conservative Byzantine literature "is not notably visual" and thus "it is not the sort of milieu where one might expect to find much pattern poetry," although some pieces do exist[38]. Nonetheless, a few paragraphs later Higgins rightfully suggests that both the pillage of the Byzantine libraries in 1204 during the Fourth Crusade, as well as the collapse of Constantinople in 1453, might quite possibly have destroyed many manuscripts.[39] Thus the question of the existence of the Byzantine visual poetry as a popular or at least developed literary genre remains open.

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[31] Vysitskii, S.A., 308-309.

[32] Vysotskii, S.A, 54.

[33] Medyntseva, A.A. *Drevnerusskie nadpisi Novhorodskogo Sofiiskogo sobora XI-XIV veka* (Moscow: Nauka, 1978), 155-156, 289.

[34] Medyntseva, 171, 296.

[35] Medyntseva, 84, 160.

[36] Karskii, E.F. *Slavianskaia kirillovskaia paleografiia,* 247.

[37] Berkov, P. *Virshi. Sillabicheskaia poeziia XVII-XVIII vekov* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel, 1935), 29.

Even more complex seems to be the question of the possible import of this intellectual product from Byzantium to Kyivan Rus. Both Russian and Ukrainian scholars share the opinion that Byzantine literature was represented in a diversity of genres and forms in both religious and secular writing. There is little plausibility, however, that Byzantium could direct secular literature to the newly converted lands.

> The works of writers and poets which continued the antique practice in the most refined traditions of formalism and scholastic casuistry and which were created for the Byzantine nobility – these works Byzantium had never exported to the countries destined to become its cultural colonies. The works which were sent to Kyivan Rus either met the most imperative needs of the new Christian cult or could promote by their specific features and content Byzantine cultural hegemony over the "barbarians" to be "civilized."[40]

In any case, even if some occasional pieces of the Old Eastern European visual poetry ever existed, none have survived. The Tatar-Mongol invasion of the 13th to the 15th centuries, besides suspending creative activity in Kyivan Rus, destroyed many cultural monuments and manuscripts which could have represented various aspects of the Ukrainian literary and cultural legacy of the early Medieval period.

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[38] Higgins, Dick. *Pattern Poetry: Guide to an Unknown Literature* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 22.

[39] Higgins, 23.

[40] Biletskyi, O. "Perekladna literatura vizantiisko-bolharskoho pokhodzhennia," *Zibrannia prats u p"iaty tomakh.* Vol. 1 (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1965), 130.

The Eastern Slavic or, more precisely, Ukrainian literature of the 14th to the 16th centuries seems to have been written in the traditions of the previous ornamental style of Kyivan Rus. Neither essential innovations in style nor new literary genres have been registered. Under the circumstances of the Tatar-Mongol yoke, the internecine feuding of the princes, disintegration and decline of the state, Lithuanian and Polish expansion and further absorption of Ukrainian lands into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the cultural progress of Ukraine diminished dramatically. As in Kyivan times, from the 14th to the 16th centuries Orthodoxy "remained synonymous with culture" and "the church served for Ukrainians as the only institutional means of expressing their collective identity."[41] Unfortunately, the Orthodox church suffered a deep decline too. As a result Orthodoxy's cultural contributions were limited.

> Schools, once one of the church's most attractive features, were neglected. Unqualified teachers barely succeeded in familiarizing their pupils with the rudiments of reading, writing, and Holy Scriptures. The curriculum of the schools had changed little since medieval times. The fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453 added to the intellectual and cultural stagnation by depriving the Orthodox of their most advanced and inspiring model. Lacking both external and internal stimuli, Orthodox culture slipped into ritualism, parochialism, and decay.[42]

It need not to be pointed out that there was no hope for major literary forms to flourish in such a disastrous situation, to say nothing of marginal visual writing. Nor is it surprising that the Ukrainian literary legacy of the period is exceptionally scant. Nonetheless, according to the eminent Ukrainian historian Hrushevskyi, the Tatar invasion followed by years of decay did not ruin Ukrainian cultural activity completely , nor did it drive it away to the Great-Russian area (whose complex socio-political situation was not quite favourable for cultural activity either), as Russian historians claim. Hrushevskyi considered the two southwestern principalities of Galicia and Volhynia to be the most direct inheritors of Kyiv's political and cultural traditions of the period. But in the Kyivan region itself cultural traditions, it is widely held, revived simultaneously with the revival of the city.[43]

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[41] Subtelny, Orest. *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto University of Toronto Press in association of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1994), 92.

[42] Subtelny, 93.

A renewed interest in visual writing during the 16th to the 18th centuries in Ukraine was part of a general revival of culture and literature. In the early 17th century Kyiv, which was steadily growing more influential and wealthy, reemerged as the centre of Ukrainian Orthodoxy and the opposition to Polish Catholic pressure in Galicia and Volhynia. Despite the painful split of the Orthodox church which resulted in the creation of the Uniate (or Greek Catholic as it was later called) Church at the Union of Brest in 1596, the former established its ecclesiastical leadership after the consecration of Iov Borestky as Metropolitan of Kyiv in 1620 (at that time there was only one Orthodox bishop in Ukraine). The Orthodox Church of Ukraine was backed by the Zaporozhian Cossacks, who resolutely opposed union with Rome and stood behind Orthodoxy. This factor played a decisive role in the eventual recognition of the legitimacy of the Orthodox hierarchy by the Polish government (which needed Cossack support for the wars) despite the anger of both Catholics and Greek Catholics.[44]

In the 17th century, especially under the Metropolitan Petro Mohyla, Ukrainian Orthodoxy experienced an institutional and spiritual renaissance, and so did Ukrainian culture and literature. Petro Mohyla paid special attention to the development of education and scholarship and was the founder of the famous Kyivan Collegium (1632) bearing his name, which was granted the full privileges of an academy in 1694. This institution of higher learning which was patterned after Jesuit schools, became one of the most important Orthodox educational institutions among the Slavs. Its curriculum synthesized Orthodox Slavic traditions of schooling with those of the Latin Catholic West; and the language of study was Latin. The Academy offered secondary and postsecondary programmes. The former included instruction in elementary Slavonic, Latin and Greek, the fundamentals of liberal arts, the basic skills of public speaking, translation and the grammar of Slavonic, Latin and Greek. Polish was not taught but was used by professors and students as the language of communication.[45] Students also studied arithmetic, music and singing, painting and the catechism. Secondary education was completed by classes in poetics and rhetoric. Students were acquainted with the poetics of Aristotle, Horace, Vida, Scaliger, Sarbiewski, Gracián, Tesauro, Pontanus and others. Besides, the school professors prepared their own manual of poetics and rhetoric in Latin, and each manual reflected the individual preferences of the instructor. The first Kyivan poetics *Liber artis poëticae...* was written in 1637, just five years after the Academy was founded. At the postsecondary level students were taught logic, physics and metaphysics, philosophy (mainly scholastic), astronomy, geometry and theology. At all levels of schooling the study of philology which was initiated by the renaissance humanists, was cultivated in every possible way.[46]

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[43] Hrushevskyi, Mykhailo. *Istoriia ukrainskoi literatury.* Vol. 2 (Kyiv: Lybid, 1993), 52.

[44] Subtelny, Orest. *Ukraine: A History,* 119-20.

The pro-Latin orientation of the Kyiv Mohyla Academy opened a window onto Europe and maintained close relations with scholarly centres in Europe. Open to young men of various social backgeounds, the school its students a solid liberal education, and introduced to them the rich European cultural legacy, from antiquity to the Baroque period. Such an educational system combined with tough discipline, formed individuals with a very high degree of self-esteem, who were willing to rule yet could exercise great self-control and treat political authority with respect, while at the same time supporting each other.[47] It is not surprising that many eminent Ukrainian, Russian, Belarusian churchmen, educators, and writers during the 17th and the 18th centuries were graduates of the Kyiv Mohyla Academy. The role of this institution as the catalyst of intellectual life and creative activity in Eastern Slavic lands cannot be too highly regarded, inasmuch as its scholarly and literary achievement had a decisive impact on the development of Ukrainian and to a great extent on Belarusian and Russian culture and literature.

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[45] Maikov, L.N. *Ocherki iz istorii russkoi literatury XVII i XVII stoletii* (St. Peterburg: Izdanie A.S. Suvorina, 1889), 3.

[46] Nichyk, Valeriia. "Rol Kyievo-Mohylianskoi akademii v rozvytku filosofii v Ukraini," *Ukrainske barokko: Materialy 1 konhresu Mizhnarodnoi asotsiatsii ukrainistiv* (Kyiv: Instytut ukrainskoi archeolohii, 1993), 81.

[47] Maikov, L.N. *Ocherki iz istorii russkoi literatury XVII i XVII stoletii*, 5.

High standards of education and scholarship in the 16th and the 17th centuries Ukraine provided a firm foundation for successful integration of European theoretical and practical accomplishments into its culture. And the vehicle of this transformational process was the prevalent European literary style of the times – the Baroque. Baroque features were not equally distributed; they were more developed in Catholic countries than in Protestant parts of Europe. But they contributed greatly to the mutual rapprochement of the European cultures, including those of Eastern Europe. Another important characteristic of the Baroque style was its transformational aspect. Without being original in elaborating a theory of poetry and writing, it modified theoretical formulations inherited from previous epochs and developed the qualitatively new system of genres and styles, eclectic in its nature but universal for European literatures. Although some changes and additions occurred in the following centuries, the backbone of this macrostructure has not undergone any radical alterations until the present time.[48] Thus for literatures of the Orthodox Slavs the Baroque influence meant an expansion of the genre repertoire as well as adoption of new stylistic devices and fresh imagery. Although occasional manifestations of the Baroque style occurred in the late 16th century in Ukraine, Belarus and some other Eastern European territories, the process of revitalization and reformation of their cultures began in the middle of the 17th century (not as late as the first half of the 18th century as *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* writes[49]) and it lasted almost to the end of the 18th century. Among the Orthodox Slavic countries Baroque literature had the most impressive achievements in Ukraine. To a lesser extent they were notable in Belarus, whose territory was also absorbed by the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. On the other hand, the penetration of Baroque ideas and technical achievement into Russian culture, which had been isolated from the Western world as well as from the neighbouring Slavic lands for quite a long time, was very slow.

When discussing the development of the Baroque style in Slavic Orthodox countries one must keep in mind that the macrostructure of Eastern and Southern European literatures of that time differed considerably from that of Catholic Europe. In Ukrainian literature, for example, the majority of lyrical forms characteristic of West European literatures did not exist at all until the 16th century. Ukrainian printed poetry (which emerged in 1581 when Herasym Smotrytskyi's two poems in the *Ostroh Bible* and Andrii Rymsha's *Khronolohiia* (*Chronology*) appeared) derived from heraldic and emblematic verses, which were widespread in the Baroque tradition of European countries.[50] This was by no means accidental. It is generally known that the Baroque style revealed itself more abundantly in architecture, music and visual arts. In Ukrainian literature the Baroque was an extremely fertile soil for visual writing (attempted in various forms during the previous epochs, especially in the rise of Kyivan Rus ) to develop and reach a level of maturity and refinement. In this sense Ukraine followed the path of other European literatures, where the Baroque stimulated interest in visual writing and turned attention to models in antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. As Higgins observes, nearly half of all known pattern poems – one of the most popular subgenres of visual poetry – date from the 17th century.[51] Obviously, in Ukraine the acquisitions in the domain of visual writing were of relatively lesser scope and value. But they might never have been developed to the fullest, especially during a relatively short period, without the strong and direct influence of European Baroque culture. Ukrainian visual writing did not originate during the Baroque era, but Ukrainian visual poetry as a specific form of poetic practice was fully established within the framework of this period.

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[48] Nalyvaiko, Dmytro. "Stanovlennia novoi zhanrovoi systemy v ukrainskyi literaturi doby barokko," *Ukrainske barokko: Materialy 1 konhresu Mizhnarodnoi asotsiatsii ukrainistiv* (Kyiv: Instytut ukrainskoi archeolohii, 1993: 13-14.

[49] *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics.* Alex Preminger and T.V.F. Brogan, eds. (New York: MJF Books, 1993), 121.

The essential factor which stimulated interest in visual poetry in Ukraine was on the one hand, the availability of the most important Western poetics to Ukrainian students, and, on the other, the preparation of Latin manuals of poetics and rhetoric by Kyivan instructors themselves. There is no record that the *Palatine Anthology*, a collection of some 37,000 Greek epigrams made by an unknown Byzantine scholar around A.D. 980 was known to Ukrainian scholars, but the professors of the Kyivan Mohyla Academy were familiar with the monumental seven-volume *Encyclopedia* by the German Protestant theologist, Johann Heinrich Alsted, where visual poetry received a most thorough treatment. The name of the Protestant scholar was taboo for the Orthodox Kyivan scholars, and therefore Alsted was referred to as the "author of the *Encyclopedia*."[52]

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[50] Nalyvaiko, D. S. *Spilnist' i svoieridnist: ukrainska literatura v konteksti ievropeiskoho literaturnoho protsesu* (Kyiv: Dnipro, 1988), 122.

[51] Higgins, Dick. *Pattern Poetry: A Guide to an Unknown Literature*, 11.

According to Hryhorii Syvokin, who examined unpublished Kyivan poetics of the 17th to 18th centuries, courses of poetics at Kyivan Mohyla Academy provided a close study of the *carmina curiosa,* almost as detailed as treatment of epic, drama and lyric.[53] It is important that Kyivan manuals of poetics did not copy those written by Western authors. Kyivan scholars illustrated their theoretical statements with visual poems of their own and wherever possible gave the Ukrainian variants of acrostics, labyrinths, palindromes, numerical, alphabetical, coordinated and other poems which reflected international traditions of visual writing.[54] The scholarly philological program undoubtedly stimulated the remarkable efflorescence of Ukrainian Baroque literature, and visual poetry in particular. In addition, the progress of Ukrainian conventional and visual poetry was conditioned by the poetic practice of individual poets, who were not affiliated with any institution of learning or cultural centre. Quite a number of poets belonged to the lower classes of Ukrainian society (petty bourgeois, wandering cantors, cossacks, peasants) and could express their thoughts and feelings independently of the clerical or secular censorship.[55] Most of them did not have much concern for their authorship and their works remained anonymous, unless they cunningly worked their names into acrostics and other poetic forms.

The proliferation during the 17th to 18th centuries in Ukraine of what later was called visual poetry was truly remarkable. In Ukrainian literature both so-called curious and emblematic poetry originated from the genre of the epigram, as the latter tends to synthesize visual and verbal impulses of creativity.[56] The interest in epigrams, which so visibly manifested itself in Ukrainian literature during the 17th century, might have been induced by the typological affinity for "a satiric or aphoristic observation with wit, extreme condensation and, above all brevity,"[57] characteristic of the classical epigram and those of Ukrainian folklore.[58] The disintegration of the epigram in Ukrainian Baroque literature resulted in the appearance of new forms, which were later combined in two large groups: curious poetry and emblematic poetry; the former employed the synthetical manner of visual image creation, the latter, the analytical one.[59] If curious poetry is based upon the verbal conceit,[60] the emblematic one is marked by the notional conceit. Early Kyivan poetics (from the first one which appeared in 1637 to *Font Catalius* of 1700) treated these two groups of poetry separately. Symbols, puzzle-poems, epitaphs and inscriptions were classified as forms of emblematic poetry, while palindromes, acrostics, correlative verses, coordinated poems, and figure or pattern poems were included as kinds of curious poetry.

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[52] Kvetnickij, Fedor. *Clavis Poetica*, ed. B. Unlenbruch (Cologne: Slavistische Forschunden, 1985), lxx-lxxi.

[53] Syvokin, H.M. *Davni ukrainski poetyky* (Kharkiv: Vydavnytsvo Kharkivskoho derzhavnoho universytetu, 1960), 95.

[54] Soroka, Mykola. *Zorova poeziia v ukrainskii literaturi kintsia XVI-XVIII st.* (Kyiv: Holovna spetsializovana redaktsiia literatury movamy natsionalnykh menshyn Ukrainy, 1997), 66.

[55] Iaremenko, Vasyl. "Dva stolittia kyivskoi poezii," *Apollonova liutnia: Kyivski poety XVII-XVIII st.* (Kyiv: Molod, 1982), 15.

According to Mykola Soroka, the dual nature of the word (the verbal and the visual) foreordains the further division of curious poetry into two groups: subgenres based on the verbal conceit and subgenres based on the visual conceit. The first group includes echo-poems, assonance, anaphoric and epiphoric verses, leonine verse, protean poems and other forms, in which the subtle ideas aiming to challenge the reader's wit are created by sonic repetition and other sound effects. The second group comprises poems with explicit visual conceits, like pattern poems, acro-, meso- and telestics, labyrinths, alphabet poems, Pythagorean poems, chronograms, cabalistic, numerical, correlated, coordinated poems, anagrams, square poems, paromean poems, palindromes and others.[61] In this type of poetry visual conceit functions as the determinant of genre inasmuch as the content of curious poetry may not necessarily differ from that of conventional poems.

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[56] Krekoten, Volodymyr. "Ukrainska poeziia XVII st. v systemi skhidnoievropeiskoi literatury barokko," *Ukrainske barokko: Materialy I konkresu Mizhnarodnoi assotsiatsii ukrainistiv*, 60.

[57] *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics,* Alex Preminger and T.V.F. Brogan, eds. 375.

[58] Trofimuk, Myroslav. "Barokkovi tendentsii kursiv slovesnosti Kyevo-Mohylianskoi akademii," *Ukrainske barokko: Materialy I konkresu Mizhnarodnoi asstciastii ukrainistiv*, 91.

[59] Soroka, Mykola. *Zorova poeziia v ukrainskii literatury kintsia XVI-XVIII st.*, 118.

[60] The term *concetti* was borrowed from Italian poetry and finally came to designate all kinds of precious points or subtle ideas presented in an antithetical form – *zgodną niezgodnością lub niezgodna zgodnością* ("the discordant concordance or concordant discordance"), as Maciej Sarbiewski defines the phenomenon. See: Sarbiewski, M.K. *Wuklady poetyki (Praecepta poetica)*, Krakow: Zaklad narodowy im. Ossolińskich Wudawnictwo Polskiej Akademii nauk, 1958), 11.

Emblematic poetry, which includes emblems, symbols, heraldic verses, epitaphs and poems for portraits, was another highly developed genre of visual poetry in Ukraine. The genre itself fell into two groups: visual emblems and descriptive emblems (defined by Sazonova as emblematic poems – *emblematicheskie stikhi*[62]), in which the visual image as such was not among the structural components of the composition but was present implicitly, conveyed by hypothesis, which "paints things so vividly and with such energy that they become in some way visible."[63] In a strict sense emblematic poems can hardly be characterized as samples of visual writing, even if they turn description into an image or a picture. Emblems proper traditionally form composite pictures by combinations of texts and images. Structurally each emblem consists of three parts: a short motto introducing the subject or theme, which is symbolically brought forth in the picture itself, which is elucidated by an epigram.[64]

An early manifestation of the tendency towards visual poetry in the 16th century was the appearance of acrostics by Hryhorii Chui.[65] The alphabet acrostic also appeared in the *Azbuka* (*Primer*) printed in Ukraine by Ivan Fedorov (the founder of book printing and publishing who came from Russia) as early as 1574, although some scholars suggest that this acrostic might have been created much earlier.[66] Later a contribution to the genre was made by a heraldic poem shaped as a cross by H. Smotrytskyi which was published in *Ostrozhska Bibliia* (*The Ostroh Bible*) in 1581.[67] Another heraldic verse on the coat of arms of the archimandrite of the Kyivan Cave Monastery Ielysei Pletenetskyi "Velykodnii dar" ("Easter Gift"), was composed by Kyiv poet Stepan Berynda in 1623 and characterized by Soroka as the first Ukrainian figure poem[68] (Fig. 15). This visual composition consists of a cross (with one cross-beam at the top and three additional half-beams on the right side) and on the left side a crescent curved away from the cross with the face of the archimandrite emerging from it. The panegyrical text, praising his Christian merits, is located inside the cross.

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[61] Soroka, Mykola. *Zorova poeziia v ukrainskii literatury kintsia XVI-XVIII st.*, 74.

[62] Sazonova, L. *Poetika russkogo barokko* (Moscow: Nauka, 1991), 100.

[63] Dupriez, Bernard. *A Dictionary of Literary Devices: Gradus, A-Z.*, tr. Albert W. Halsall (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 219.

[64] Dupriez, 326.

[65] This acrostic was referred to as the Polish one in P. Rypson's *Obraz slova: Historia poezij wizualnej* (Warszawa: Akademia Ruchu, 1989), 191. However, as M. Soroka rightfully observes, Hryhorii Chui was a "rusyn from Sambor" (*Grzegorz z Sambora* in Rypson's interpretation) and therefore his poetry should be documented as the Ukrainian piece. (See: Mykola Soroka. *Zorova poeziia v ukrainskii literatury kintsia XVI-XVIII st.*, 104, 194).

By and large Ukrainian visual poetry of the 16th to 18th centuries was represented by a variety of forms and subgenres, the best classification of which is presented in Soroka's table of the generic system of visual poetry in Ukraine of the time (Tabl. 1.1).

It is quite understandable that not all Baroque poets wrote visual poetry. However, many Ukrainian poets and scholars made their valuable contribution to the development of the genre. Among those who composed curious poetry we should mention Stepan Berynda, Lazar Baranovych, Dymytrii Tuptalo, Lavrentii Krshchonovych, Oleksandr Mytura, Kasiian Sakovych, Afanasii Kalnofoiskyi, Klymentii Zinoviiv, Dionisii Kunytskyi, Davyd Andrievych, Hruhorii Butovych, Oleksandr Padalskyi, Stefan Yavorskyi. Sometimes the authorship of the work cannot be identified, as in the pyramid-shaped figure poem in Latin in the collection *Mnemosyne sławy, prac i trudów przeoświeconego w Bogu oyca, iego mości oyca Piotra Mohiły, wojewodzica Ziem Mołdawskich, uprzywileiowanego prawosławnego metropolity Kiowskiego, Halickiego y wszyztkiey Rusi exarchy S. Thronu Konstantynopolskiego, archimandryty cudotworney S. Ławry Peczarskiey Kiowskiey ... od studentów gymnasium w bractwie Kijowski*, dedicated to Petro Mohyla by students of the Kyivan Colleguim two years after the founding of the institution[69] (Fig. 16).

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[66] See: Nemirovskii, E.L. *Nachalo knigopechataniia na Ukraine. Ivan Fedorov* (Moscow: Kniga, 1974), 81; Soroka, Mykola. *Zorova poeziia v ukrainskii literaturi kintsia XVI-XVIII st.*, 107.

[67] Soroka, Mykola. *Zorova poeziia v ukrainskii literaturi kintsia XVI-XVIII st,* 194.

[68] Soroka, 84-85.

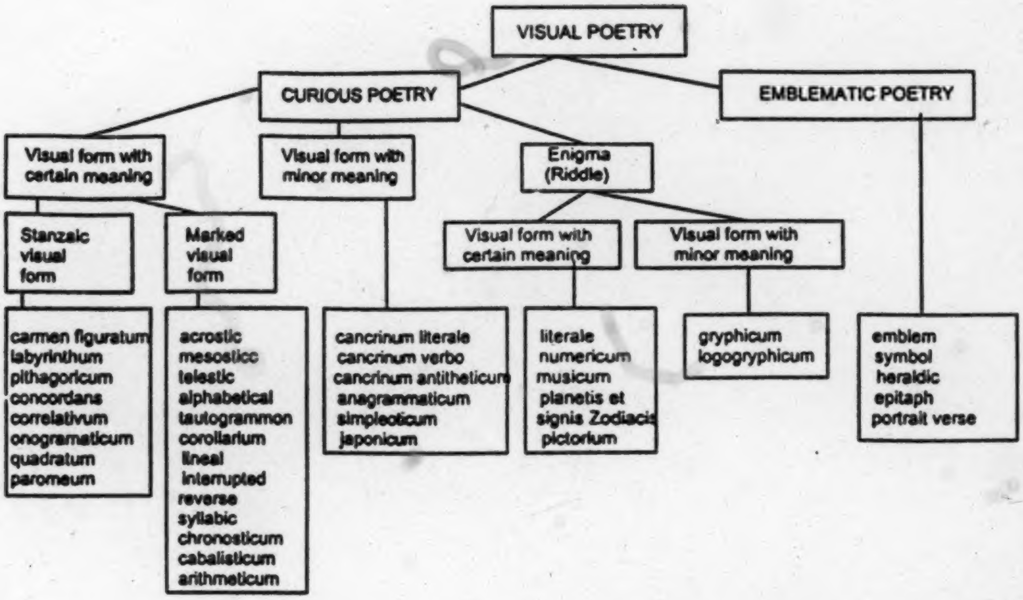
VISUAL POETRY
CURIOUS POETRY
EMBLEMATIC POETRY
Visual form with certain meaning
Visual form with minor meaning
Enigma (Riddle)
Stanzaic visual form
Marked visual form
Visual form with certain meaning
Visual form with minor meaning
carmen figuratum
labyrinthum
pithagoricum
concordans
correlativum
onogramaticum
quadratum
paromeum
acrostic
mesosticc
telestic
alphabetical
tautogrammon
corollarium
lineal
interrupted
reverse
syllabic
chronosticum
cabalisticum
arithmeticum
cancrinum literale
cancrinum verbo
cancrinum antitheticum
anagrammaticum
simpleoticum
japonicum
literale
numericum
musicum
planetis et signis Zodiacis
pictorium
gryphicum
logogryphicum
emblem
symbol
heraldic
epitaph
portrait verse

Table 1.1. Genre system of visual poetry in Baroque Ukrainian literature. From M. Soroka, *Zorova poeziia v ukrainskii literaturi kintsia XVI-XVIII st,* 198. Printed by the author's permission.

Sometimes the authorship cannot be accurately defined. Several anonymous Ukrainian acrostics are also known from the 17th and 18th centuries, and in some cases only the first name of the author has been preserved in the history of literature.[70] The genre of emblematic poetry in Ukrainian literature was developed by Andrii Rymsha, Herasym Smotrytskyi, Damian Nalyvaiko, Meletii Smotrytskyi, Stepan Berynda, Tarasii Zemka, Havryil Dorofiievych, Kyrylo Trankvilion-Stavrovetskyi, Lasar Baranovych, Hryhorii Skovoroda. Among the most remarkable examples of visual poetry of that time, however, are pattern poems found in Ivan Velychkovskyi's two collections: *Zegar z poluzegarkom* (*The watch with the half-watch,* 1690) and *Mleko ot ovtsi pastiru nalezhnoe (The sheep's milk deserving of the shepherd,*1691), and Mytrofan Dovhalevskyis's *Hortus Poeticus* (*Garden of Poetry,* 1736).

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[69] In his *Pattern Poetry: A Guide to Unknown Literature* (132) Dick Higgins related this poem to the Polish tradition of visual poetry, stating that it was written by the students of the Jesuit College in 1633. As Soroka rightfully observes, despite the Polish language (the common language of communication in Kyiv at the time), this piece should still be documented as belonging to Ukrainian visual poetry, because it was composed by the students of the Kyivan Orthodox institution of learning. Soroka also suggested Vasyl Ustrytskyi (Basillius Ustrzycki), who authored some other works from the same collection, as the plausible author of the poem. For further details see: Soroka, Mykola. *Zorova poeziia v ukrainskii literatury kintsia XVI-XVIII st.*, 86-87.

Little is known about Ivan Velychkovskyi's life and creativity. He was educated in Kyivan Mohyla Collegium in the 1660s and after graduation worked as an editor and proofreader at Lazar Baranovych's printing house in Chernihiv. Later Velychkovskyi was ordained and served as prebyster of the Holy Virgin Assumption Church in Poltava until his death in 1701. As is obvious from the dedication of his book *Mleko* to the Kyiv Metropolitan Varlaam Iasynskyi, Velychkovsky began to write poetry as a young man.[71] Velychkovskyi's collections included such forms of visual poetry as acrostics, mesoctics, literal, verbal and contradictory palindromes, chronograms, leonine verses, echo poems, alphabet verses, labyrinths, protean poems, verses with letters replaced by their Church Slavonic names, and other forms of visual poetry which became popular during the Baroque era. Many of his poems contained letters printed in the upper case or written in vermillion, which, if read separately or in groups, formed the name of the author, sometimes in direct and sometimes in reverse order (Fig. 17).[72] Velychkovskyi also drew upon the oldest form of visual poetry, known as pattern poetry. In his collection *Mleko* poems are configured within such visual images as flames (Fig. 18)[73] and the pyramid (Fig. 19).[74] In addition to the labyrinth with the traditional

[70] See: Iaremenko, Vasyl, ed., *Apollonova lultnla: Kylvski poety XVII-XVIII st.*, 282-85.

[71] Kolosova, V.P., Krekoten, V.I. "Do pytannia pro zhyttia i tvorchist Ivana Velychkovskoho," Velychkovskyi, Ivan. *Tvory* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1972), 21, 25.

[72] Velychkovskyi, Ivan. *Tvory,* Fig. 33, n. pag.

[73] Velychkovskyi, Fig. 23, n. pag.

[74] Velychkovskyi, Fig. 32, n. pag.

method of ingress (Fig. 20),[75] the poet created several typographical variations of the form in which the message begins either at the corners of the composition ending in the centre (Fig. 21),[76] or from the central letter of its initial and final lines, crossing the centre and ending in the middle of the vertical line (Fig. 22),[77] as well as vice versa. (Fig. 23).[78]

It is noteworthy that in Velyckovskyi's collections – which were not intended as poetic manuals – almost every poem is accompanied by a brief rhetoric comment. Velychkovskyi's poetic legacy was the first known and highly succeesful attempt in Eastern Slavic culture to interpret traditional philosophical and religious themes through new Baroque forms, including those previously "unappropriated" for serious subjects in the form of curious poetry. For the poet himself this synthesis was natural. Another important fact is that Velyckovskyi wrote predominantly in Ukrainian.[79] In his preface to *Mleko* he clarified the motivation behind his poetical efforts by stating that, to his utter dissappointment, he could not find in his national literature skilfully done and witty poetic pieces which could please the contemporary as well as future reader, and thus he felt obliged to fill the lacuna.[80] As an educated and well-read man in European literatures (he even translated 31 Latin epigrams of the British Baroque poet John Owen),[81] Velychkovskyi could not but realize that the worth and dignity of Ukrainian literature had to be reaffirmed by establishing artistic standards on a level with European ones and by making a case for poetry in a national language.[82] Sophisticated curious poetry (in his preface to *Mleko* Velychkovskyi assured his reader that his collection was free from any simple or elementary verse[83]) was an ideal genre for demonstrating the rich potential of versification in Ukrainian, thus developing a national literary tradition parallel to the European one, and at the same time entertaining the reader. Velychkovskyi attributed the aesthetic value of curious and pattern poetry to the intellectual stimulation of the reader who is forced to resolve bewildering and challenging puzzles (he even invited the reader to produce his own curious poems), but many of his works are foregrounded as asthetic objects as well. Not infrequently Velychkovskyi juxtaposed his verbal games with graphical and coloristic effects, and this synthesis of different media intensified both the artistic and communicative aspect of his works.

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[75] Velychkovskyi, 84.

[76] Velychkovskyi, 84.

[77] Velychkovskyi, 84.

[78] Velychkovskyi, 84.

[79] Velychkovskyi's poetic works are registered in George Shevelov's *A Historical Phonology of the Ukrainian Language* as texts in Middle Ukrainian, which was used alongside the new (Meletian) version of Church Slavonic and Polish languages, not to mention vernacular. See: Shevelov, George Y. A *Historical Phonology of the Ukrainian Language* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1979), 555-89.

[80] Vekychkovskyi, Ivan. *Tvory*, 70-71.

[81] For more information on the subject see: Betko, I.P. "Ivan Velychkovskyi – perekladach." *Myshanych, O.V.*, ed. *Ukrainske literaturne barokko* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1987), 193-211.

History has not preserved much data on Mytrofan Dovhalevskyi's life and career. But it is known that in the academic year 1736-1737 he served as professor at the Kyiv Mohyla Academy. *Hortus Poeticus* was created to be the textbook for the course of poetics which the author taught at this institution. It included detailed characteristics of various poetic genres and forms, including that of curious poetry. Dovhalevskyi discussed the artistic principles behind acrostics, palindromes, chronograms, pattern poetry, leonine and Pythagorean verses, onogramatic, proteus, square, correlated and coordinated poems, numeral verses, labyrinth and cabbalistic poems, and provided examples for each subgenre. In addition to curious poetry Dovhalevskyi explored the possibilities of rebuses or puzzle poems, and even provided his students with guidance for creating such forms as musical, Zodiacal and astronomical verses, labyrinth poems (Fig. 24, 25)[84] with the initial letter of the phrase occuring at the top left-corner, in the centre of the top line or in the very centre of the text. He is also responsible for introducing such forms as poems in the shape of a coat of arms (of the Zaborovskyi family) fused with a heart (Fig. 26)[85] and a Latin cross (Fig. 27),[86] both with explicit symbolic import.

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[82] A characterististic feature of the Ukrainian literature of the17th and 18th centure was its bilingualism; it was written in Ukrainian or Polish depending on genre, theme or the projected audience. It is worth mentioning that Polish literature of the time was highly developed and sophisticated. Therefore, Ukrainian writing had to reach the same height in technical resoursefulness and language refinment in order to be competitive. See: Grabowicz, G G. "Ukrainian Poetry," *The New Princeton Enccyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, Alex Preminger and T.V.F. Brogan, eds. 1993, 1335.

[83] Velychkovskyi, Ivan. *Tvory*, 71.

[84] Dovholevskyi, Ivan. *Poetyka.* Trans. Ivan Masliuk (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1972), 294, 295.

The question of the influence of Baroque aesthetics and poetic practice on the creative principles of Ukrainian visual poetry requires further study since little scholarship exists on this subject.[87] Nonetheless, it is possible to suggest that visual poetry, whether created within the specific context of the Baroque period or in modern times, requires the realization of one of the fundamental principles of Baroque metaphorical language, namely, the transformation of abstract ideas and conceptions into ocular forms. The same wittiness and inventiveness of mind, however, capable of quickly grasping the essence of diverse phenomena in an attempt to draw them together in a revelatory way, was very characteristic of Baroque poetic technique as well. Mytrofan Dovhalevskyi treats "ingenuity" and "inventiveness of mind" as the basis for poetical imagination and creativity in general.[88] As Dmytro Nalyvaiko has observed, "'the allegorizing consciousness' of the Baroque was searching everywhere for hidden correlations, especially those between the realm of abstract notions and the sphere of concrete and visual signs."[89] It is not surprising that both emblematic and curious poetry became extremely popular literary genres in Ukraine, which, in turn, contributed to the development of a new – at least for Ukrainian literature – poetics, based on the recognition of the priority of visual art. This poetics tended towards the verbal binding of notions, ideas and symbolic signs to plastic visual images.

In the course of the 18th century, however, the attitude to visual poetry gradually changed for the worse, and by the end of the century visual poetry was criticized severely by both clerical and non-clerical academics. In the 18th century the *carmina curiosa* received less and less attention from the Kyivan authors of the textbook on poetics. In his well-known *De Arte Poetica* of 1705 Teofan Prokopovych analysed the epigrammatic poetry but did not mention curious poetry at all.[90] Other eminent professors who gave courses on poetics to Academy students (Lavrentii Horka, the author of the *Idea artis poëseos* of 1707, Georgii Konyskyi who wrote the *Praecepta de arte poëtica* of 1746 and, by the way, was the reformer of leonine verse[91] – deliberately omitted visual poetry as labor-intensive quips which were needless and unpleasant in the Slavic languages.[92] Such a negative attitude on the part of those prominent scholars could not but result in the waning of interest in word-play poetry. The following decades were marked by the preferential development of more conventional poetic genres.

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[85] Dovholevskyi, 280.

[86] Dovholevskyi, 293.

[87] One of the few discussions on the subject mentioned above is to be found in the second chapter of Mykola Soroka's book *Zorova poeziia v ukrainskii literaturi kintsia XVI-XVIII st.* titled as "Osoblyvosti styliu baroko i zorova poeziia," 55-72.

[88] Nalyvaiko, D.S. *Spilnist i svoieridnist: ukrainska literatura v konteksti ievropeiskoho literaturnoho protsesy,* 141-142.

[89] Nalyvaiko, 143.

After the revival of writing in the Ukrainian vernacular spurred by the Romantic era, the tsarist government in the second half of the 19th century imposed restrictions on Ukrainian literature. In 1876, in accordance with the Ems Ukaz of Russian Tsar Alexander II, the importing and publication of Ukrainian books, as well as other cultural and educational activities in Ukrainian, were prohibited. Under such circumstances the progress of the principal genres and forms of national literature was very problematic, to say nothing about a marginalized form of writing as visual poetry. Nonetheless, later literary historians also attacked visual poetry with an obsessive sterness. In his influential *Istoriia ukrainskoho pysmenstva* (*A History of Ukrainian Belle-Lettres*) Serhii Iefremov, a distinguished Ukrainian scholar of the turn of the 20th century, characterized the accomplished virtuosity of visual poetry (both curious and emblematic) as "versemania" and eccentric poetic experimentation which is thrilling to an undemanding taste and performed by versifiers unable to create any meaningful poetry.[93] Hryhorii Syvokin, who was quite restrained in his treatment of visual poetry, still associated it with "versified prestidigitation".[94] The most distinguished contemporary Russian expert of European versification Mikhail Gasparov has summarized the achievements of the European tradition of visual writing from antiquity to the turn of this century by categorically stating: "all these were nothing but oddities on the periphery of literature."[95] Up to the most recent times, when Soroka's *Zorova poeziia v ukrainskiii literaturi kintsia XVI-XVIII st* ( *Visual Poetry in Ukrainian Literature from the End of the 16th to the18th Centuries*) was published the only academic who treated Ukrainian visual poetry as a literary genre of some artistic value was Dmytro Chyzhevskyi.[96] Nonetheless, even he entitled one of his studies on visual poetry "Poza mezhamy krasy" ("Beyond the border of beauty").

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[90] Prokopovych, Feofan. *Sochineniia.* Ed. I.P. Eremin (Moscow; Leningrad: Izdatelstvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1961), 322-34.

[91] Iefremov, Serhii. *Istoriia ukrainskoho pysmenstva.* Vol. 1 (Kyiv; Leipzig: Ukrainska nakladnia, 1924), 227.

[92] Syvokin. H.M. *Davni ukrainski poetyky,* 97.

[93] Iefremov, Serhii. *Istoriia ukrainskoho pysmenstva.* Vol. 1, 226-27.

The question whether Russian literature had a 'genuine' Baroque period remains open, although many scholars tend to associate the poetic legacy of Simeon Polotskii and his followers Silvestr Medvedev and Karion Istomin with the Baroque style. As more than one scholar has stated, the literature of the North-Eastern Slavs, which remained initiative of the Kyivan style for a fairly long time, was established as authentic literature only in the second half of the 14th century (according to Mykhailo Hrushevskyi only in the 15th century[97]), although even at that time it was influenced by Kyivan literature of the 11th to the 13th centuries. The political situation, however, mposed changeso\ on literary activity and progress: political barriers were established, in addition to the cultural and ethnographical ones which already separated the Muscovite state from other Slavic peoples. In the 14th century the neighboring territories of Ukraine and Belarus came under the domination of Lithuania and Poland, and their status

[94] Syvokin. H.M. *Davni ukrainski poetyky*, 97.

[95] Gasparov, M.L. *A History of European Versification*, trs. G.S. Smith and Marina Tarlinskaja, ed. G.S. Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 290.

[96] See: Chyzhevskyi, D. *Poza mezhamy krasy* (New-York: Ukrainsko-amerykanske vydavnyche tovarystvo, 1952); Chyzhevskyi, Dmytro. *Istoriia ukrainskow literatury: Vid pochatkiv do doby realizmu* (New York: Ukrainska Vilna Akademiia nauk u SShA, 1956), 268-271; Tschiżewskij, Dmitrij. *Formalistische Dichtung bei den Slaven* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1958); Čyževʼskyj, Dmytro. *A History of Ukrainian Literature: From the 11th to the End of the 19th Century*, trs. Dolly Ferguson, Doreen Gorsline, and Ulana Petyk, ed. George S.N. Luckyj (Littleton: Ukrainian Academic Press, 1975), 300-305.

[97] Hrushevskyi, Mykhailo. *Istoriia ukrainskoi literatury*. Vol. 2 (Kyiv: Lybid, 1993), 59.

declined in political, economic and cultural terms. The Tatar rule weakened its ties with Byzantine (which had lost its power after the fall of Constantinople) and the rest of the Christian world. Thus Russian territories united under the power of the princes of Moscow[98] turned out to be isolated from both Western and Eastern Europe, and its population, "when left culturally alone and having to be self-dependent, were unable to develop a high-ranking independent culture."[99]

The political situation in the Muscovite state could hardly be characterized as beneficial for any cultural progress. The struggle for throne, the alliances formed among the junior princes against the Feudal Prince which lasted until the year 1380 (when all Russian princes defeated the Tatars under the Muscovite standard) was followed by the long and painful process of territorial absorption of all Russian lands by the powerful Muscovite ruler, who finally gained the status of Tsar of Great Rus and became an absolute dictator. The final centralization of the state was completed under the reign of Ivan the Terrible who decimated the population of the country through the ruthless annihilation of whole families of insubordinates including women, children, servants and serfs. The whole country was paralyzed by terror.[100]

In this atmosphere of mass horror and entire unlawfulness caused by the absolute power of the cruelly paranoid monarch and the Oprichnina – the institution created by Ivan the Terrible to exercize his tyranny[101] – the indifference towards new cultural values is understandable. Moreover, as a result of this centralization of Russian lands all cultural activity of the Russian provinces by the 16th century was determined solely by Moscow, whose writings wwere completly divorced from the European literary process. As Chyzhevskyi states, the features of Muscovite literature "bear no resemblance whatsoever to those [...] in the West."[102] As he further argues, "similar too, is the case of the relation to the literatures of other Slav peoples – Poles, Czechs, Croats and even Ukrainians and Byelorussians [sic.]. [...] In fact, the literature of none of them has anything in common with the Moscovite, either in content or in form!"[103] It is curious that even the art of book-printing, which quickly developed and spread throughout European countries, in 16th-century Muscovy was limited to the futile attempt of Ivan Fedorov. Before his printing press was destroyed by a mob and he was forced to escape to Lithuania, Fedorov managed to print the *Gospel* and the *Acts of the Apostles*. Afterwards he continued his publishing activities in Ukraine and Belarus. Only in the middle of the 17th century was a general change towards acceptance of Western culture or at least some of its elements felt. The major contribitors to the Russian cultural revival were Ukraine and Belarus. There were numerous Ukrainian teachers, translators and preachers in the Muscovy of the 17th century. This fact urges Golenishchev-Kutuzov to postulate the problematic inseparability of Polish-Ukrainian-Russian culture of the 16th to the 17th centuries.[104]

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[98] The rise of Moscow (a far-away and newly founded town) as well as its success in accumulating lands of the Russian North-East into a single great principality in the 14th century was quite an unexpected phenomenon, which did nor receive any explanation in ancient chronicles. In the absence of direct evidence a prominent Russia historian V. O.Kluchevsky gives two hypothetical reasons for the unexpected but truly impressive growth of Moscow: its beneficial geographical position and the genealogical position of its Prince. The Princes of Moscow, being junior of the Russian princely stock, did not have much hope to attain to the highest rung of seniority and thus they resorted to other means ranging from acts of diplomacy to acts of brigandage with the Tatars. Finally in 1328 the Moscow prince Ivan Kalita received the throne of Rus from the Tatars as an acknowledgement of his loyal service. Since that time the princes of Moscow had retained the Supreme throne and expanded their power over other Russain principalities. (Kluchevsky, V.O. *A History of Russia*. Vol. 1, tr. C.J. Hogarth (New York: Russel and Russell, 1960, 272-86).

[99] Čiževskij, Dmitrij. *A History of Russian Literature*, 215.

[100] Kluchevsky, V.O. *A History of Russia*. Vol. 2, tr. C. J. Hogarth (New York: Russell and Russell, 1960), 88.

In general the idea of the shared literary achievements of all Eastern Slavic cultures has been exaggerated by Russian scholars. Even such a distinguished expert on Old Russian literature as D. S. Likhachev has insisted that up to the 17th century there was a common literature for all Eastern and Southern Europeans (including the Romanians, who are, in a strict sense not Slavs); some Western Slavic cultures of the time are also referred to as members of the group.[105] Western scholars and expatriate writers in most cases do not share this view. Speaking of the 16th and the 17th centuries, Chyzhevskyi suggests that at that time even Orthodox Ukrainians "showed themselves culturally alien" to Russians.[106] It would be more accurate to speak of the importation of Ukrainian, Belarusian and Polish traditions and accomplishments to the less sophisticated and less developed Russian culture, which, in many senses looked like "a daughterly branch of Ukrainian literature."[107] The issue of equal mutual influence of that time, to say nothing about "inseparability" or "community" of the above-mentioned literatures can hardly be considered seriously. Russian visual poetry in particular, whose origin is unquestionably indebted to Ukrainian educational and cultural traditions, sets a pronounced example. Golenishchev-Kutuzov has to acknowledge that Western standards of education, as well as patterns of eloquence and poetics, penetrated into 17th century Muscovy from Ukraine and Belarus. The crucial role in promoting education in Russia was played by the Kyiv Mohyla Academy, whose graduates served as teachers at many Russian institutions of learning, and their number was increased under the reign of Peter the Great in the next century. Besides teachers (many of whom came from the clergy), Ukraine also supplied Russia with high ranking priests and preachers, many of whom were active literary figures. Among them were: Dymytrii Typtalo (1651-1709), Metropolitan of Rostov and a poet who left an enormous legacy, including masterfully done acrostics; Metropolitan and "Deputy Patriarch" Stefan Iavorskyi (1658-1722), the poet, preacher and founder of the Russian Academy; Teofan Prokopovych (in Russian Feofan Prokopovich, 1681-1736), a professor and rector of the Kyiv Academy, well-known for his numerous works in theology, treatise and poetry, as well as for his manuals of poetics, who played an instrumental role in Peter the Great's educational reforms in Russia and was appointed Archbishop of Novgorod; Simon Todorskyi (1700-1754), the Bishop of Pskov and Narva and the favorite preacher at the Empress Elizaveta's court. As Serhii Iefremov argues,

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[101] Khluchevsky, V.O., 88.

[102] Čiževskij, Dmitrij. *A History of Russian Literature*, 230.

[103] Čiževskij, 230.

[104] Golenishchev-Kutuzov, I. *Slavianskie literatury. Statti i issledovaniia* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1973), 215.

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[105] Likhachev, D. S. *Poetika drevnerusskoi literatury* (Moscow; Leningrad: Nauka, 1967), 6-7.

[106] Čiževskij, Dmitrij. *A History of Russian Literature,* 320.

[107] Chyzhevskyi, D. *Istoriia ukrainskoi literatury* (Prague: Vydavnytstvo Iuriia Tyshchenka, 1942), 126.

> having escaped from Polish rule, Ukraine paid its tribute in cultural resources and literature in particular, to the Muscovite state. The difference between the two states lay in the fact that Poland took cultural resources in a similar way. However, at the same time it transferred to our country those cultural accomplishments and influences which it took from Europe, whereas for a long time Moscow took without offering anything in return, and in this way our land was drained culturally without any sense or measure.[108]

Needless to say, the first 'Russian' poet who also gained the title of court preacher and the position of tutor to the heir to the throne, was a representative of the Kyiv school, inasmuch as he spent his formative years in the Kyiv Mohyla Collegium and later brought to his post a knowledge of the Baroque practices of Europe. Samuil Petrovskii-Sitnianovich (1629-1680), known by his monastic name Simeon and the surname Polotskii, which was derived from the name of the city where he began his career as a monk, was Belarusian by origin. He received his education, however, in the Kyivan Colleguim and probably in the Jesuit College in Vilna. Years of schooling comprised an important period in Poloskii's life; the training in poetics and rhetoric, which he underwent as a student, resulted in his technical craftsmanship and thus his successful poetic career. After his graduation, Polotskii took his monastic vow and for several years served in Polotsk, where he met Tsar Alekseii in 1656 and greeted him with his own verses. His literary merits were duly acknowledged and in 1663 he was invited to the capital where he pursued the career of a tutor to the Tsar's children and also wrote intensively, both poetry (including panegyrics and elegies for the Tsar and his family), and theological treatises. Although his creative output extends beyond the two huge collections of verses (each has over 1200 pages), of special interest for the present study are the poems which are meant to be seen from Polotskii's *Rifmologion, ili stikhoslov* (*Rhymology*, 1678-1680) and *Vertograd mnogotsvetnyi* (*The Multicolored Garden*, 1676-1680). Polotskii's interest in emblematic and curious poetry is evident even in his earliest poems in Polish, written in his student years or early in his teaching career; many of them abound in emblematic and iconographic elements or are linked to particular illustrations or engravings.[109] *Rifmologion* was the first encyclopedic collection of Russian panegyric poetry,[110] while *Vertograd mnogotsvetnyi* was intended as a panoramic narrative in the form of Christian didactic poetry, dealing with the universal issues of world creation, fundamentals of the Christian faith, morality, and other essential aspects of Christian existence.[111] Both collections contain a number of epigrams, emblems and emblematic poems. Those from *Vertograd mnogotsvetnyi* have a moralising and instructive character; while in *Rifmologion* emblematic poetry in most cases is used to glorify the monarch and his family.[112] Polotskii's collections also contain various forms of curious poetry: shaped poems, in the form of a heart (Fig. 28),[113] a star (Fig. 29),[114] a sun (Fig. 30),[115] and several poems in the shape of a cross (Fig. 31)[116]; labyrinth poems, acrostics, anagrams, cryptograms, poems, the halves of which can be read separately, literary ornaments and other poems to be examined and enjoyed by the eye. Russian scholar Lidiia Sazonova defines visual writing of Polotskii as "symbolic graphemes," each functions as "visual representation of an idea, as a metaphor in its graphic variant."[117] Thus the author turns his reader into a viewer with the idea of suprising and astounding him as well as providing him with a deeper insight into the semantic meaning of the visual message. This approach undoubtedly cultivates the image of a word as a graphic sign. It is not surprising that Polotskii had quite a number of poems with a strong visual appeal, many of which were not intended for reciting or hearing. Not infrequently their visuality was further emphasized by the application of various colors: black, dark brown, gold and vermillion, often with symbolic effect.

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[108] Iefremov, S. *Istoriia ukrainskoho pysmenstva*. Vol. 1, 169-70.

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[109] Roland, Petro. "Ikonolohichni elementy rannikh virshiv Symeona Polotskoho," *Ukrainske barokko: Materialy I konhresy Mizhnarodnoi asotsiatsii ukrainistiv*, 127-29.

[110] Grebeniuk, V.P. "*Rifmologion* Simeona Polotskogo: Istoriia sozdaniia, struktura, idei," Robinson A.N., ed. *Simeon Polotskii i ego knigoizdatelskaia deiatelnost* (Moscow: Nauka, 1982), 308.

[111] Sazonova, L.I. "*Vertograd mnogotsvetnyi* Simeona Polotskogo: Evolutsiia khudozhestvennogo zamysla," Robinson, A.N., ed. *Simeon Polotskii I ego knigoizdatelskaia deialnost*, 254.

[112] Hippisley, Anthony. *The Poetic Style of Simeon Polotsky* (Burmingham: Department of Russian Language & Literature, 1985), 45.

[113] Polotskii, Simeon. Emblem from *Orel Rossiiskii.* See: Sazonova, L.I. *Poeziia russkogo barokko*, 82.

[114] See: Sazonova, L.I. *Poeziia russkogo barokko*, 83.

[115] See: Sazonova, L.I. *Poeziia russkogo barokko*, 85.

[116] See: Sazonova, L.I. *Poeziia russkogo barokko*, 80.

[117] Sazonova, L.I. *Poeziia russkogo barokko,*, 78.

Scholars are not unanimous in their evaluation of the impact of Simeon Polotskii's poetic legacy on Russian culture. For many Western scholars his poetic output in general and visual poetry in particular "seems to be a purely imported product without a native Russian source,"[118] which could not be regarded highly in a country, where visual poetry did not form an extensive tradition. Moreover, Polotskii's poetic practice could hardly serve as a model for Russian masters inasmuch as his works did not enjoy a wide circulation besides his sole published book *Psalter,* a collection of metrical psalms. Both his major manuscripts *Vertograd mnogotsvetnyi* and *Rifmologion* lay unpublished for three centuries. This leads researchers to the conclusion that "despite his prodigious output Polotskii has had little effect on the development of Russian poetry."[119]

Russian scholars traditionally rank Polotskii's influence on their national literature higher than do most Western slavists.[120] Among the first Russian philologists who acknowledged Polotskii's contribution to Russian literature was the 18th-century scholar and poet Vasilii Trediakovskii, who in his 1755 article "O drevnem, srednem i novom stikhotvorenii rossiiskom" ("About Old, Medium and New Russian Verse") referred to Polotskii as the very first poet of Great Russia.[121] Nonetheless, Polotskii's impact on Russian literature was not

[118] Janecek, Gerald. *The Look of Russian Literature: Avant-Garde, Visual Experiments, 1900-1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 8.

[119] Hippisley, Anthony. *The Poetic Style of Simeon Polotsky*, 2.

[120]The Swedish researcher. A. Nilsson, who reported and analyzed Russian Heraldic Verses from the 17th century held at the Diocesan and County Library in Vāsredås, also states that Simeon Polotskii was without doubt a model for the known and anonymous authors of heraldic verses in the 17th century. Moreover, in his opinion this tradition continued into the 18th century and was echoed as late as at the beginning of 20th century in Klebnikov's poetry. See: Nilsson., Nils Åke *Russian Heraldic Virši from the 17th Century* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1964), 16-17, 71.

[121] Trediakovskii, V K. "O drevnem, srednem i novom stikhotvorenii rossiiskom," *Ezhemesiachnye sochineniia k polze i uveseleniiu sluzhashchie,* June (1755), 521.

necessarily viewed as a positive factor for its futher development.[122] According to Dmytro Chyzhevskyi, Russian poetry was guided by Polotskii's creativity for eighty years.[123] Lidiia Sazonova has stated that Polotskii left behind him a poetic school well integrated into Russian culture,[124] but she named only two followers of Polotskii's tradition in Russian literature of the 17th and early18th centuries: Silvestr Medvedev (1641-1691) and Karion Istomin (1650[?]-1717 or 1722). As she argues, all three poets form part of tradition of Russian Baroque poetry, including the poetry which emphasized hieroglyphic signs and thus was meant to be seen rather than read.[125] Earlier Medvedev and Istomin had been recognized as Polotskii's successors by Ivan Rozanov, who nevertheless stressed that none of Polovskii's disciples surpassed him in the creativity or variety of genres he represented.[126] Quite the opposite opinion, however, is expressed by the contemporary Russian scholar A.N. Robinson, who, despite recognizing that Polotskii had a small but notable school, still contends that his legacy had not received the attention it deserved from the following generations of Russian men of letters: they cared for the creative output and the poetic language of the Archpriest Avvakum,[127] who left behind him numerous epistles and sermons, yet none of them recalled Simeon Polotskii.[128] Thus, the question of the significance of Polotskii's poetic output remains in dispute and probably needs further investigation.

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[122] See: Kheraskov, M.M. "Rassuzhdenie o rossiiskom stikhotvorstve," *Russkaia literaturnaia kritika XVII v.: Sbornik tekstov* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1978), 278.

[123] Čiževskij, Dmitrij. *A History of Russian Literature,* 350.

[124] Sazonova, L.I. *Poeziia russkogo barokko,* 16.

[125] Sazonova, 17, 78.

[126] Rozanov, Iv. N. "Russkoe knizhnoe stikhotvorstvo ot nachala pismennosti do Lomonosova," Berkov, P., ed. *Virshi: Sillabicheskaia poeziia XVII-XVIII vekov,* 59.

[127] Archpriest Avvakum was the leader of the Old Believers opposition to the innovations of Church traditions attempted in the second part of the 17th century by the Russian Patriarch Nikon. Like other priests of his camp Avvakum supported the sacredness of Church traditions and protested against the intervention of the State into Church affairs. He also opposed the improving of sacred texts and their interpretation. Because of his leading role in the oppostion and his refusal to make the slightest concession, he was finally deprived of his priesthood, outlawed, and imprisoned in dungeon. The greater part of his works (mostly sermons and epistles) he wrote during his imprisonment.

[128] Robinson, A.N. "Simeon Polotskii i russkii literaturnyi protsess," Robinson, A.N., ed. *Simeon Polotskii i ego knihoizdatelskaia deiatelnost,* 13, 43, 45.

The followers of Polotskii have received even less attention from scholars and writers than the first Baroque poet. It is known that Medvedev was Polotskii's disciple and began his career as an instructor of grammar at the Monastery of Our Saviour behind the Icon (*Zaikonospasskii*) School founded by Polotskii. When the latter became tutor to the heir to the Russian throne, Tsarevich Aleksei, Medvedev served as school principal. The school, however, had never developed into a proper educational institution, and Medvedev continued his career as an editor and later the director of the Moscow governmental printing house. His social connections and poetic credentials allowed him to patronize his younger disciple and relative by marriage Karion Istomin, who took his monastic vows on Medvedev's suggestion. It was Medvedev who promoted Istomin and recommended him for the position of director of the printing house in Moscow, when he himself, after Polotskii's death, was invited to be tutor of the Tsar's children. After the execution of Medvedev by order of Peter the Great (Medvedev, as a devoted adherent of Tsar Peter's step-sister the Princess Sophia, was involved in a conspiracy against the Tsar) in the last decade of the 17th century, Istomin inherited the title of the first Russian poet. Like his predecessors Polotskii and Medvedev, Istomin was a staunch supporter of enlightenment through education. Although he was not without gifts as a poet, his poetry was primarily devoted to the promulgation of his educational ideas.

We have to recognize that although both Medvedev and Istomin made their contribution to the visual tradition of Russian poetry (the former by his emblematic poem dedicated to the Princess Sofia[129], the latter as the author of acrostics and the pattern poem in the shape of the Christmas egg[130]), their creative output can hardly be compared to that of Simeon Polotskii. Occasional pieces of visual poetry were written by other writers: the monk named German from New Jerusalem wrote several acrostics,[131] the monk Evstratii composed a coordinated poem (Fig. 32),[132] the archemandrite Tikhon from the Nizny Novgorod eparchy and the monk Mardarii Khonikov from Moscow both authored lengthy acrostic poems, written in 1678 and 1679 respectively.[133] Dymytrii Tuptalo also used this form to compose one of his spiritual songs.[134]

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[129] Sazonova, L.I. *Poeziia russkogo barokko,* 90.

[130] Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii muzei (Moscow), Chudovskoe sobranie # 302, fol. 136.

[131] Adrianova-Perets, V.P., ed. *Russkaia sillabicheskaia poeziia XVII-XVIII vv.*, 96-103.

[132] Adrianova-Perets, 39-40.

In the 18th century the tradition of visual poetry was not very productive, although the achievements of the Baroque poets were not lost to the following generations of writers. Two laments which contain acrostics are registered among the poetry of the Old Believers' community on the river Vyg in Nothern Russia; and one of them is ascribed to a woman.[135] An undistinguished poet, Mikhail Sobakin, is reported to have written the acrostic "Vivat, Anna Velikaiia" ("Vivat, Anna the Great"), which at the same time was a *carmen gryphicum.*[136] The same author also composed a poem to celebrate the capture of the city of Azov by Russian troops in 1736 in which he emphasized some successive letters which form new words with apparent political connotations: *Rossiia* (Russia), *Anna* (Empress Anna), *Azov*, *Krym* (Crimea), etc. (Fig. 33)[137]. Emphasized letters were also used in the epigram of the well-known poet and reformer of Russian verse, Vasilii Trediakovskii, in his translation of Paul Tellemant's *Voyage à l'île d'Amour (Ezda v ostrov liubvi)* which was published in 1730.[138] The first representative of Russian Classicism, Aleksandr Sumarokov, wrote verses in the shape of a cross, while Gavriil Derzhavin contributed to visual poetry by palindromes and verses in the shape of a pyramid (Fig. 34)[139] and a coffin (the latter was written in memory of Russian Field Marshall Aleksandr Suvorov). According to Drage, Derzhavin's pattern poem shaped as a coffin has an original form inasmuch as none of the previous recorded picture poems of

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[133] Adrianova-Perets, 175-81.

[134] Adrianova-Peterts, 253-54.

[135] Adrianova-Peterts, 304-306, 396.

[136] Berkov, P., ed. *Virshi: Sillabicheskaia poeziia XVII-XVIII vekov,* 255-59.

[137] Berkov, P. *Virshi: Sillabicheskaia oieziia XVII-XVIII vekov,* 258-59.

[138] Vasilev, E.V., ed., *Russkaia epigramma vtoroi polovinyXVII - nachala XX v* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel, 1975), 66, 629.

[139] See: Biriukov, Sergei. *Zevgma: Russkaia poeziiaot manerizma do postmodernizma* (Moscow, Nauka, 1994), 162.

European tradition provided a model[140] (Fig. 35). Antiokh Kantemir (1708-1744), often called the first modern Russian poet (he was the son of Moldavian prince Dmitrii and not Russian by origin), composed a chronogram in honour of Peter II's coronation in 1728,[141] (Fig. 36), as well as three epigrams, one of them being an acrostic based on the author's first name.[142] Several figure poems (rondeaux) were written by Aleksei Rzhevskii[143] (Fig. 37).[144] Most likely inspired by Simeon Polotskii's "Privetstvo" ("Greetings," which was dedicated to the marriage of one of the Russian boyars), Rzhevskii also composed a sonnet in which the fourteen hexametric lines may be easily divided into two twenty-eight lines of iambic trimeters.[145] It is interesting that two variants, belonging to the same genre of love poem (which was not practiced by Polotskii) differ in their content: the hexametric variant can be characterized as a love poem; the meaning of the iambic one seems ambiguous, as it combines both love and antilove verses (which is to say, verses praising love and verses condemning it). Acrostic riddles were written by the second-rate poets Ippolit Boghanovich and Iurii Neledinskii-Meletinskii. Among other subgenres of visual poetry occasionally appearing in 18th-century Russian literature we should mention the *carmen antitheticum*, palindromic poems, the *carmen gryphicum*, echo poems, Pythagorium poems (Fig. 38),[146] and acrostics.[147]

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[140] Drage, C.L. *Russian World-Play Poetry From Simeon Polotskii to Derzhavin: Its Classical and Baroque Context* (London: School of Slavonic and East European Studies), 12.

[141] Chizhevskii, Dmitrii. "K problemam literatury barokko u slavian," *Litteraria XIII: Literárny barok* (Bratislava: Vydavatelstvo Slovenskej Akadémie Vied, 1970), 37.

[142] Drage, C.L. *Russian World-Play Poetry From Simeon Polotskii to Derzhavin: Its Classical and Baroque Context*, 33.

[143] Gukovskii, G.A. *Russkaia poeziia XVIII v.* (Leningrad: Academiia, 1927), 181.

[144] Drage, C.L. *Russian World-Play Poetry From Simeon Polotskii to Derzhavin: Its Classical and Baroque Context*, n. pag.

[145] Tschižewskij, Dmitrij. *Formalistische Ditchtung bei den Slaven*, 48-49.

[146] Berkov, P. *Virshi: Sillabicheskaia oleziia XVII-XVIII vekov*, 273.

[147] Russian visual poetry of the 18th century is documented in Berkov, P., ed. *Virshi: Sillabicheskaia poeziia XVII-XVIII vekov;* Tschižewskij, Dmitrij. *Formalistische Ditchtung bei den Slaven* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1958), Čiževskij, Dmitrij. *A History of Russian Literature;* Chizhevskii, Dmitrii. "K problemam literatury barokko y slavian," *Litteraria XIII: Literárny barok* (Bratislava: Vydavatelstvo

Many Russian visual poems of the time, however, were nothing but close imitations of the best Ukrainian contributors.[148] Thus, small-scale and isolated pieces of *carmina curiosa*, scattered among the poetic legacy of various Russian poets of 17th and 18th century did not form a national tradition of visual writing. It may therefore be significant, that the poetic works of the most eminent Russian poet and scholar of the 18th century, Mikhail Lomonosov, who undoubtedly belongs to the Baroque tradition of Russian literature, do not contain visual poems. According to Drage, the *carmina curiosa*, which had been part of the traditional syllabus of the European religious schools, did not have a basis for successful development in Russia:

> Apart from providing intellectual entertainment they had educational functions, among them ~~to~~ develop the linguistic abilities of future preachers and theologians. But the lay schools founded in Moscow and St. Petersburg in the first half of the eighteenth century had quite different aims. They jettisoned almost the entire medieval academic syllabus and along with it the *carmina curiosa*, introducing instead the sciences, modern languages, social accomplishments and professional skills. [...] In the second part of the eighteenth century outside the religious schools the carmina curiosa could not retain their *afficionados*. Poetic puzzles could not compete with the richer intellectual fare being offered by the literary journals, translated and original stories and novels, and the theatre.[149]

In the 19th century only a few pieces of visual poetry appeared – pattern poems by I. Rukavishnikov (Fig. 39),[150] A. Apukhtin (Fig. 40),[151] Erl. Martov's "Rhombus" (Fig.

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Slovenskej Akadémie Vied, 1970). Quite a number of Russian visual poems of the time is represented in C.L. Drage's study *Russian World-Play Poetry From Simeon Polotskii to Derzhavin: Its Classical and Baroque Context.*

[148] Čiževskij, Dmitrij. *A History of Russian Literature*, 367.

[149] Drage, C.L. *Russian World-Play Poetry From Simeon Polotskii to Derzhavin: Its Classical and Baroque Context*, 91-92.

[150] Biriukov, Sergei. *Zevgma: Russkaia poeziiaot manerizma do postmodernizma*, 165.

[151] Biriukov, 163.

41).[152] Eventually at the beginning of the 20th century visual writing reappeared on the Russian literary scene in the works of Russian avant-garde writers. The beginning of this period was associated with the first typographical experiments[153] in the printing of *Symphony* which was published in 1902 by the Symbolist Andrei Belyi. Belyi attempted visual experiments in both prose and poetry, although an unorthodox layout of his prose – abundant with indentations of textual segments, syntactically unmotivated dashes and double dashes, the numbering of paragraphs consecutively, shaped paragraphs and framed segments – seems to be more innovative and interesting than the visual effects of his poetry. Nonetheless, Belyi was obviously more concerned with the aural expression of the text and its representation through visual configurations than with the visual dimension of his writing as such. As Gerald Janecek suggests, his "visual devices are comparable to a sheet of music with signs that guide the performer."[154] For that particular reason Belyi's shaped or configured prose, meant to be interpreted sonically, is perceived as a truly original phenomenon, while his poetry – ontologically aural as a genre – does not produce the same impression. Further experiments with the visual aspect of the text were attempted by writers of various Avant Garde schools and trends, although the most notable contribution to the development of visual writing in Russia was made by the adherents of Futurism (1912-1930)[155] and Constructivism (1923-

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[152] Biriukov, 164.

[153] As Vladimir Markov pointed out capitalization for stylistic effect was practiced in the 18th century. In his epigrams V. Trediakovskii employed lower-case land upper-case letters to address his opponents. See: Markov, Vladimir. *Russian Futurism: A History,* (Berkeley and Los Angelos: University of California Press, 1968), 415; *Russkaia epigramma: XVIII-nachalo XX veka.* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel, 1988), 52.

[154] Janecek, Gerald. *The Look of Russian Literature: Avant-Garde, Visual Experiments, 1900-1930,* 65.

[155] Scholars, as well as futurists themselves, are not unanimous as for the date of the movement's inception. Vasilii Kamenskii dated Futurism from 1909, when the three brothers Burliuk, Maiakovskii, E. Guro, E. Nizen, Miasoedov and himself began to work on the first futurists collection *Sadok sudei* (*A Trap for Judges*); Livshits – from 1911. Both Kruchenykh and Maiakovskii dated it from 1912. The end of Russian Futurism is usually associated with the increasingly restrictive measures of the Stalinist period in the late 20's, when many artistic trends were suppressed by the authorities, and the death of Maiakovskii in 1930. See: Kamenskii, Vasilii. *Tango s korovami. Stepan Razin, Zvuchal vesneianki. Put entuziasta* (Moscow: Kniga, 1990), 445; Livshits, Benedikt. *The One and Half-Eyed Archer (Newtonville: Oriental Research Partners,* 1977), 35; Maiakovskii, V. V. *Polnoe sobranie*

1930).

The Futurists' versatile engagement in visual experimentation was by no means accidental. Many futurists were professional artists: Elena Guro (Eleonora von Notenberg), David Burliuk, Sergei Bobrov, Khrisanf (Lev Zak), Aleksei Krychenykh. The best-known Russian Futurist poet, Vladimir Malakovskii, was an art student at the Stroganovskii artistic-industrial college and later at the Moscow Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture. Others, who did not pursue a professional artistic career, still knew how to paint and draw. As Nikolai Kulbin, a scholar and most ardent propagandist of avant-garde ideas put it: "An artist of the word always has the ability to paint."[156] The reverse process was also quite fruitful as many Russian avant-garde artists (M. Larionov, M. Chagall, A. Lentulov, V. Bart) endeavoured to write poetry; Pavel Filonov, a well-known avant-garde artists and illustrator of Futurist books published his own book of poetry *Propoved o prorosli mirovoi* (*Sermon of Universal Flowering*); another eminent Russian avant-garde artist, Kazimir Malevich wrote a theoretical piece "O poezii" ("On Poetry").[157] The intersection of poetic and artistic trends in Russian at the beginning of this century was a characteristic feature of the time.[158] For many Futurist practitioners and theoreticians the similarity of painting and poetry was obvious, and they even attempted to analyze poetry by a terminology which had been established and used by art critics.

It is worth keeping in mind that Russian Futurism was a complex and diverse movement which comprised various trends and groups, each following its own aesthetic program. In a

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*sochinenii v 13 tomakh.* Vol. 7 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatelstvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1955-1961), 40; Markov, Vladimir. *Russian Futurism: A History,* 26-27.

[156] Kulbin, N. *Studiia impressionistov* (St. Peterburg: Izdatelstvo N.I. Butkovskoi, 1910), 11.

[157] Khardzhiev, Nikolai "Poeziia i zhivopis," Khardzhiev, Nikolai, Malevich, Kazimir, and Matiushin, Mikhail. *K istorii russkogo avangarda* (Stockholm: Hylaea Prints, 1976), 23.

[158] The same process took place in France approximately the same time: French poets Guillaume Apollinaire, Blaise Cendrars, Pierre-Albert Birot, Andre Salmond, Jean Cocteau, Max Jacob, Paul Eluard, Tristan Tzara and some others are established in painting or graphics as well. A brief comparative analysis of this phenomenon in both countries is attempted in Nikolai Khardzhiev' s "Poeziia i zhivopis." Khardzhiev, Nikolai, Malevich Kazimir, and Matiushin, Mikhail. *K istorii russkogo avangarda,* 23-25. In Germany the Expressionist Oscar Kokoschka also experimented in both media, painting and poetry.

strict sense none of these groups stated its ideological aims and expressed its aesthetic program in clear terms, although all of them were concerned with the rejection of past canons and norms in order to shock philistines. At the heart of the movement were Cubo-Futurists, originally named Hilea (Hylaea), whose adherents (the brothers Burliuk, Maiakovskii, Kamenskii, Khlebnikov, Guro, who died an untimely death, Livshits, and Kruchenykh) declared "an insurmountable hatred" for the previously existed language, called for the increasing vocabulary with arbitrary and derivative words, proclaimed the word as the self-sufficient and tended toward a polyartistic technique.

Being very much concerned with new words and new means of verbal expressiveness, Cubo-Futurists took great care to stress visual devices as well. Their experiments with typography and page layout, as well as the collage method of painting, contributed greatly to the art of book-design. Starting from the very first samples, the design of their poetic collections and pamphlets, suggesting a sharp contrast to the elegant and lavish production of the Symbolists, was in most cases obviously striking: for the manifesto *Poshchechna obshchestvennomu vkusu* (*A Slap in the Face of Public Taste*) a grey and brown wrapping paper was chosen; the first collection, *Sadok sudei*, was printed on the reverse side of cheap wall-paper with blank and unnumbered verso pages. Kamenskii also published his books *Tango s korovami (Tango with Cows*) and *Nagoi sredi odetych* (*The Naked One among the Clad*) on the reverse side of variegated wall-paper.[159] Lithographed books of Kruchenykh shocked readers with their handwritten text and primitive drawings (which were close to the popular Russian broadsheet or *lubok*) or intentional blurring of textual and illustrative material; later, when he moved to Georgia and together with Kirill and Ilia Zdanevich founded the group 41°,[160] he ornamented his books with multicolored collages. Some books of the Cubo-Futurists contained quite meaningless lines, printed by ink stamp with the intention of irritating readers.[161] Generally in book design Cubo-Futurists closely collaborated with such prominent avant-garde painters as Pavel Filonov, Kazimir Malevich, Vladimir Tatlin, Olga Rozanova, Mikhail Larionov, Natalia Goncharova, Natan Altman, Aleksandr Rodchenko and others.

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[159] Compton, Susan P. *The World Backwards: Russian Futurists Books: 1912-16* (London: The British Library), 1978, 83.

[160] Group 41° was not infrequently described as the Russian Dada. See: Compton, Susan. *Russian Avant-Garde Books: 1917-34* (London: The British Library, 1992), 72.

[161] Kovtun, E.F. *Russkaia futuristicheskaia kniga* (Moscow: Kniga, 1989), 26.

Individual works of Cubo-Futurists were also marked by unorthodox layout and typography. Maiakovskii's experiments with poetic language employed a number of techniques: chopping up words, mixing typefaces, mirroring devices, column and stepladder layout; his ROSTA (the acronym for Russian Telegraph Agency) posters combined text (intended for a barely literate audience) with the author's illustrations in the satirical vein of Russian cheap folk lithographs. Burliuk enthusiastically mixed typefaces for emphatic purposes in his poems. Both Maiakovskii and Burliuk used letters to create visual images suggestive of lines, various geometrical figures or abstractions.[162] Kamenskii was solely responsible for the invention of the form of "ferroconcrete" poems, structurally free compositions, in which words (mostly nominative title-forms) were grouped on the basis of semantic associations and distributed on the whole page space (Fig. 42).[163] He was also an explorer of typesetting resources (Fg. 43).[164] As more than one scholar observes, the iconic effects were not the main achievements of the Russian Futurists' typography, yet it was still "richly inventive and in many ways superior to the work of the Italian Futurists."[165] The Cubo-Futurists' concern with visual experiments had primarily utilitarian applications inasmuch as visual effects extended the possibilities of the "self-sufficient" word to develop new forms for an adequate reflection of a new contemporary reality. The concept of an art for the street was not alien to any of the Cubo-Futurists; its most articulate advocate, however, was Maiakovskii, who proclaimed: "We need a word for life. We do not recognize useless art."[166] Although the works of all Cubo-Futurists present a good illustration of this statement, it was Malakovskii who produced almost single-handedly many thousands of ROSTA propaganda posters and for years played a prominent role in the "industrial" movement, strongly preoccupied with technological and industrial progress.[167]

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[162] Perloff, Marjorie. *The Futurists Moment: Avant-Garde, Avant Guerre, and the Language of Rapture* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 157.

[163] Kamenskii, Vasilii. "Zhelezobetonnaia poema," *Tango s korovami. Stepan Razin, Zvuchal vesnelanki. Put entuziasta*, 25.

[164] Kamenskii, Vasilii. "Tango s korovami," *Tango s korovami. Stepan Razin, Zvuchal vesnelanki. Put entuziasta*, 26.

[165] White, John J. *Aspects of the First Avant-Garde* (Oxford: Charendon Press: 1990), 48-49. See also Compton, Susan. *The World Backwards: Russian Futurists Books, 1912-1919*; and *Russian Avant-Garde Books: 1917-34*.

Petersburg Ego-Futurism (Igor Severianin, Ivan Ignatiev, Vasilisk Gnedov, Pavel Shirokov, Dmitrii Kriuchkov, George Ivanov, Graal-Arelskii – the latter two brief visitors in the movement) was another current of Russian Futurism, which, however, differed considerably from Cubo-Futurism. Unlike Cubo-Futurists, who explored the variety of ways and forms of interaction between painting and literature, Ego-Futurists, represented solely by writers, propagated limitless individualism and individual intuitive capacity as the basis for creativity and demonstrated an aptitude for experimentation in rhyme, extravagant urban imagery and the invention of neologisms. They should be also praised for transplanting the term "Futurism" to Russian soil, as it was brought to the country by Igor Severianin in 1911. By that time Cubo-Futurists called themselves *budetliane* (or *budetlianin* in singular), a term invented by Khlebnikov, which derived from the verb *budet*, the future tense of the verb "to be" – "will be"'[168] Although visual and graphic considerations did not play a large part in works of Ego-Futurists, Ignatiev and Gnedov were apt at some experiments with letter arrangements. Ignatiev even attempted to construct a synthetic form of "melo-letera-grapha" in which the textual material was interpolated with angular symbols and musical notes, thus symbolising the unity of word, colour, melody and movement.[169] These visual exercises of Gnedov and Ignatiev led their contemporary K. Chukovskii, a critic and expert on the Futurists,[170] to the conclusion that both poets were closer to Cubo-Futurists than to their Petersburg counterparts.[171]

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[166] Malakovskii, Vladimir. "Bez belykh flagov," *Sobranie sochinenii* v dvenadtsati tomakh. Vol. 11 (Moscow: Pravda, 1978), 51.

[167] See: Sidorina, Elena. *Skvoz ves dvadtsatyi vek: Khudozhesvenno-proektnye kontseptsii russkogo avangarda* (Moscow: Russkii mir, 1994), 109-112,

[168] Kamenskii, Vasilii. *Tango s korovami. Stepan Razin, Zvuchal vesnelanki. Put entuziasta*, 443.

[169] Markov, Vladimir. *Russian Futurism: A History*, 81-82.

[170] Although Chukovskii, who later became one of the leading Soviet critics, lectured extensively on Futurism and authored several works on the subject, in the opinion of the Futurists, as expressed by Livshits in his memoir, he "didn't understand Futurism any better than [...] other critics and treated what he did think of value rather superficially and flippantly. Still, he was conscientious and

The quite eclectic Moscow group Tsentrifuga (Centrifuge) (Sergei Bobrov, Konstantin Bolshakov, Grigorii Petnikov, Konstantin Loks, Boris Pasternak, Nikolai Aseev) is usually recognised as one of the Futurists alliances, in spite the fact that it came into existence as a Symbolist group and even after a reunion with the Futurist mainstream was not quite free from its symbolist past. One of Tsentrifuga representatives, Konstantin Bolshakov is known as the author of rayonist poems – poetic works, visually complicated by mixing of Slavic and Latin words, various sizes of type and other visual devices.

The Futurist group of Vadim Shershenevich and Lev Zack, Mezonin poezii (The Mezzanine of Poetry), should be mentioned as the shortest-lived of Futurist amalgamations, surviving for only half a year. Ideologically and aesthetically the group was closer to the Petersburg Ego-Futurists. Shershenevich had a reputation as "the first, and probably, the only Russian Futurist who acknowledged Marinetti's Futurism as the starting point and tried to create a Russian version along the same lines."[172] Although the leaders of the group, Shershenevich and Zak, were primarily concerned with rhymes (each in his particular way), Shershenevich attempted some experimentation with typography in his poetic collections *Krematorii zdravomysliia* (*Crematorium of Common Sense*) and *Loshad kak loshad (Horse like a Horse*).

There also were some minor groups, whose connection with the movement was more tenuous; and some Futurist poets were members of predominantly artistic groups. Thus Ilya Zdanevych, whose typographical works made a considerable contribution to the art of book design as well as to commercial painting, was the only poet in the group of Mikhail Larionov. The latter was also known as the inventor of Rayonist (or Rayist) painting which was "concerned with spatial form obtained through the crossing of light rays reflected from various

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incomparably more gifted than his professional colleagues." See: Livshits, Benedikt. *The One and a Half-Eyed Archer,* 155.

[171] Chukovskii, Kornei. *Ego-futuristy i kubo-futuristy.* (Letchworth: Prideaux Press, 1976), 49.

[172] Markov, Vladimir. *Russian Futurism: A History,* 105.

objects selected by the artist."[173]

Theoretically, Russian Futurism was backed by two scholarly groups, both outside the academy: the Moscow Linguistic Circle (1915-1920), which was composed primarily of linguists (Roman Jakobson, Grigorii Vinokur and Petr Bogatyrev) and the Petersburg OPOIaZ (1916-1923) – an acronym for the Obshchestvo po izucheniiu poetichedkogo iazyka (Society for the Study of Poetic Language) – whose members were mainly literary historians (Viktor Shklovskii, Iurii Tynianov, Boris Eikhenbaum, Boris Tomashevskii, Viktor Vinogradov, Lev Iakubinski, Osip Brik). The attention and the theories developed by these scholars most likely encouraged Futurists in their experiments with language or made them more aware of this particular aspect of their creativity; in its turn the Futurist practice influenced theories developed by the Formalists.[174] It is worth mentioning that membership in Futurist and Avant Garde groups in general was quite tenuous; members of various groups might also form short-term alliances or subgroups. In addition to contributing to collective works and joint projects Russian Futurists, who differed among themselves considerably, published their books individually and pursued their individual careers. Very few poets espoused the tenets of the same artistic trend for their lifetime.

As for Constructivism, it emerged first as a modern art movement around 1913 and gradually spread to literature. The membership of this group included Aleksei Chicherin, the key figure in the Constructivist's practice, whose radical ideas and experiments "were not regarded with esteem by his fellow Constructivists,"[175] Kornelii Zelinskii, Ellii-Karl Selvinskii, El Lisitskii [Lissitzky], Eduard Bagritskii, Vladimir Lugovskoi and Vera Inber. As true proponents of the technological age, the Constructivists stressed the significance of technology and called for its reunion with art and literature. In their endeavour to load the smallest unit of the language with the maximum content ("everything – in a point")[176] they used a variety of non-verbal means and new printing techniques, evolving from phonetically transcribed poetic works to condensed and wordless visual pieces (Fig. 44)[177]. In his programmic theoretical work *Kan-Fun* (the title of which stands for a contraction of Constructivism-Functionalism) Chicherin advocates deverbalized poetry, which uses the "wordless material which submits to the fundamental law of constructivism"[178] as a poetic sign. For Chicherin, however, nondiscursive poems do not lie outside the bounds of poetry; they just use other means of expressivity instead of linguistic units. i.e., "a signs of pictorial presentation, called a pictogram, and an image in an object"[179] in combination with mathematical and typographical symbols, musical notations, emblems and other means of visualization (Fig. 45).[180] As has been mentioned, Chicherin's radical ideas were not shared by other Constructivists, who felt that Chicherin has gone too far in relation to "dematerialization" of poetic means. Nonetheless, all of them admitted the urgent need for new highly informative and condensed poetic means corresponding to a new technological era, and worked enthusiastically in this direction.

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[173] Barron, Stephanie, and Tuchman, Maurice, eds. *The Avant-Garde in Russia: New Perspectives, 191[illegible]930.* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Museum of Art, 1980), 180.

[174] Wellek, René. "Russian Formalism. "*Russian Modernism: Culture and the Avant-Garde, 1900-1930* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1976), 35.

[175] Weber, Gale. "Constructivism and Soviet Literature," *Soviet Union* 3 (1976): 296.

The theoreticians of Constructivism, of whom Chicherin and Zelinskii were the most notable, presented their artistic views in hearty polemics against other trends. However, as Edward Możejko suggests, "looking back in retrospect (...] they should not be judged as reacting against Futurism and Formalism, a claim that literary Constructivists liked to maintain, but rather as a complement of these two artistic and intellectual currents."[181]

In Ukraine interest in visual experiments was associated with Ukrainian Futurism

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[176] Chicherin, Aleksei, Selvinskii, Elli-Karl, and Zelinskii, Kornelii. *Mena vsekh* (Moscow: Konstructivisty-poety, 1924), 8.

[177] Chicherin, Aleksei, Selvinskii, Elli-Karl, and Zelinskii, Kornelii. *Mena vsekh*, 62.

[178] Chicherin, Aleksei. *Kan-Fun* (Moscow: Tsekh poetov, 1926), 8.

[179] Chicherin, 10.

[180] Chicherin, Aleksei, Selvinskii, Elli-Karl, and Zelinskii, Kornelii. *Mena vsekh*, 61.

[181] Możejko, Edward. "Russian Literary Constructivism: Towards a Theory of Poetic Language." *Canadian Contributors to the VIII International Congress of Slavists*. Ed. Z. Folejewski and others. (Ottawa: Canadian Association of Slavists, 1978), 69.

(1914-1930)[182], which displayed a closer affinity to the Italian counterpart than to the Russian movement. It is possible to suggest that a bond between the two Slavic movements did exist, although the question of connection and interchange between Russian and Ukrainian literary Futurists requires further study.[183] It should be kept in mind, that after centuries of suppression by the Russian empire, the Ukrainians considered the issues of national revival of primary importance. Thus, the nationalistic declarations of Italian Futurists and their belief that "political resurgence will be followed by a cultural resurgence"[184] had a special significance and meaning for Ukrainian Futurists. Although the declaration of Ukrainian Futurism was made in 1914, when a Futurist literary manifesto, solely authored by Mykhailo Semenko appeared in his collection *Kvero-Futurism* (the second of his two scandalous collections of Futurist poetry after *Derzannia*), the most dynamic period of the movement's activity in Ukraine occurred

[182] Myroslava Mudrak dates Ukrainian Futurism from the end of 1913, when the two brothers Semenko and the painter Pavlo Kovzhun organized the first Futurist group of Ukrainian writers and artists Kvero. See: Mudrak, Myroslava. M. *The New Generation and the Artistic Modernism in the Ukraine* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1986), 9. Oleh Ilnytzkyj, however, dated Ukrainian Futurism from 1914. See: Ilnytzkyj, O. S. *Ukrainian Futurism, 1914-1930: A Historical and Critical Study* (Cambridge:Harvard University Press, 1997).

[183] In Mudrak's *The New Generation and the Artistic Modernism in the Ukraine* she mentions the emissarial role of Kharkiv-born and Odessa-trained David Burliuk, as well as that of Kyiv painter Alexandra Exter (who travelled to Europe and Moscow on a regular basis) in propagating avant-garde trends in Ukraine (103-104). She also briefly characterizes Russian-Ukrainian artistic ties without commenting upon connection between the literary avant-garde movements of both Slavic countries. Benedikt Livshits, a Kyivite himself, in his memoirs *The One and A Half-Eyed Archer*, recollecting on Russian Futurists' exhibitions and performances in Kyiv, Kharkiv and other cities of Ukraine never mentiones any Ukrainian Futurist or Futurist group. The same is characteristic of Aleksei Kamenskii 's autobiographic book *Put entuziasta* (*The Road of an Enthusiast*). A. V. Krusanov, an author of one of the most recent works on Russian avant-garde, mentions several local Futurists from Kharkiv, namely V. Tretiakov, P. Korotkov, G. Petnikov, and A. Kravtsov. In his opinion, however, provincial Futurism did not make any noticeable contribution to the evolution of the movement. (See: Krusanov, A.V., *Russkii avangard: 1907-1932.* Vol. 1. *Boevoe desiatiletie* Sankt-Peterburg: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 1996, 193, 196). In the preface to his work Oleh Ilnytzkyj insists that Ukrainian Futurism was "a separate and parallel avant-garde which consciously guarded its national distinctiveness," although in the following chapters he briefly comments on "the most conspicuous link" which were established between Russian and Ukrainian avant-garde journals, namely, *Novyi Lef* and *Nova generatsiia.* He also comments on the relatioship between Ukrainian and Russian Futurism in his conclusions, stating that "the two movements had mutual interests but ultimately differed on specifics as well as on broad theoretical issues." See: Ilnytzkyj, O. S. *Ukrainian Futurism, 1914-1930: A Historical and Critical Study,* xii; 134-37; 341-345.

[184] Apollino, Umbro, ed. *Futurist Manifestos* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), 23.

during the postrevolutionary period.

Many Ukrainian intellectuals of the middle and lower classes supported the Revolution of 1917 with hopes for the revival of nationhood,[185] and the Futurists were among them. The proclamation of the political and cultural independence of Ukraine in 1917 was followed by an amazingly productive period of diverse artistic experimentation and innovation. The majority of these experiments, however, had practical rather than theoretical implications and Ukrainian Futurism, unlike its Russian counterpart, was not supported by any critical school. Formalist theory in Ukraine could not be compared to the highly developed Russian Formalism, and Marxist and sociological schools were in opposition to Futurism from its inception until its final suppression by Bolshevik authorities.[186] As an artistic and literary movement Ukrainian Futurism was not multi-sided to the extent that Russian Futurism was and at all the stages of its history centred around the figure of Myhailo Semenko, who was its principal practitioner and theoretician as well as its most adamant proponent. The first Ukrainian futurists group Kvero was founded in 1913 in Kyiv but in the complex political and cultural situation at the time the beginnings of Kvero-Futurism were not especially fertile. Semenko's revolt against the traditions of national literature and its inescapable social commitment alienated Kvero-Futurism from other literary currents which did not support the idea of the autonomous nature of art. Conservative Ukrainian critics severely criticised it as a movement which was not suited to the Ukrainian psychology or mentality.[187] In spite of this in 1919 Semenko managed to form in Kyiv the new Futurists association Flamingo, but it did not exist very long due to an unsteady political situation.

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[185] Mudrak rightfully states that the Russian Revolution represented "something different to the Ukrainians than it did for the Russians. In Russia, revolutionary forces were instrumental in finally breaking down the barriers between the social classes, while in the Ukraine, as in other nations engulfed by the political and cultural forces of the Russian Empire, the opportunity for freedom so longed for by these individual nations, took precedence over any imminent social change, and was seized at any cost, even if it meant subscribing to revolutionary socialism" (See: Mudrak, Myroslava, M. *The New Generation and the Artistic Modernism in the Ukraine* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1986), 2. It also seems very characteristic that in Ukraine the first president of the Central Rada (*rada* means "council" and is equivalent to the Russian word *sovet*) elected immediately after the Russian Revolution was not a professional revolutionary as in Russia itself but the highly respected professor of history Mykhailo Hrushevskyi. The Head of the General Secretariat (an executive branch of government) was headed by the well-known writer Volodymyr Vynnychenko.

[186] Ilnytzkyi, Oleh S. "Anatomy of a Literary Scandal: Myxajl Semenko and the Origins of Ukrainian Futurism," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 11:4 (1978), 468.

Gradually Ukrainian Futurism extended its influence to other areas of Ukraine. In Kharkiv Geo Shkurupii joined the movement and soon became its active practitioner. Other writers who were attracted by Futurism or affiliated with it for shorter or longer periods of time were Mykola Bazhan, Dmytro Buzko, Oleksa Vlyzko, Oleksa Slisarenko, Mykola Tereshenko, Leonid Skrypnyk, Oleksii Poltoratskyi and others. The most fruitful period of Ukrainian Futurism is associated with Panfuturism, which was claimed to be "at once Futurism, Cubism, Expressionism and Dadaism" but "not a synthesis" of these trends.[188] As Myroslav Shkandrij argues, Panfuturism shared with the above-mentioned modern currents its ultimate goal of "liquidation of bourgeois art."[189] The authors of the program document, "What Panfuturizm Wants?", represented Panfuturism as "the whole art" rather than a new direction in it and proclaimed principles of construction "on the basis of the accomplished destruction."[190] Panfuturists' intention to destroy traditional forms and genres of literature resulted in an effort to synthesize literature with other forms of creativity, including the visual arts, which they found especially instrumental for new aesthetic and poetic goals. Thus, Semenko's technique of fusing visual arts (painting, poster technique) with literature results in the cycles ("Kablopoema Across the Ocean") and "Moia mozaika" ("My Mosaic"), produced in 1920-21 and 1922 respectively. In addition to Semenko's *poezomaliarstvo* or poezo-painting, Panfuturists experimented with typography (the refusal of upper case letters and punctuation marks, Latin transliteration of Ukrainian letters, words and texts), montage technique and attempted to visualize prosaic discourse as in Andrii Chuzhyi's *Vedmid poliue za sontsem* (*The Bear Hunts the Sun*) and that of film-script (Favst Lopatynskyi's *Dynamo*).[191]

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[187] See: Ilnytzkyi, Oleh. "Anatomy of a Literary Scandal: Myxajl Semenko and the Origins of Ukrainian Futurism," 479-480.

[188] "What Panfuturism Wants," Leites, A. and Iashek, M., eds. *Desiat rokiv ukrainskoi literatury: 1917-1927.* Vol. 2 (Kharkiv: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo Ukrainy, 1930), 126.

[189] Shkandrij, Myroslav. *Modernists, Marxists and the Nation: The Ukrainian Literary Discussion of the 1920s.* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1992), 153.

[190] "What Panfuturism Wants," Leites, A. and Iashek, M, eds *Desiat rokiv ukrainskoi literatury: 1917-1927,* 127.

In many senses creative acquisitions of Ukrainian Futurists resembled those of their Russian counterparts. Thus, Semenko's generative visual poem "Silskyi peizazh" ("Village Landscape," fig. 46)[192] can be perceived as a conscious inversion of Kamenskii's reductive verse from the collection *Rykaiushchii Parnas* (*Roaring Parnassus*) (Fig. 47), with which Semenko was familiar.[193] Semenko's "Kablepoema za okean" ("Cablepoem Across the Ocean," 1920-21), a complex cycle of eight pages, each functioning as separate compositions and as integral parts of the large-scale work (Fig. 48),[194] echoed Russian Constructivists El Lisitskii's "Tale of Two Squares," composed in 1920 in Vitebsk and published in 1922 in Berlin.[195] This list can be extended. Although there is no firm evidence that either Russian Futurists or Semenko and his literary colleagues were directly influenced in their works by European (primarily Italian) Futurists, many scholars point to the typological affinity which existed between works of Italian Futurists and their Slavic counterparts. The question of mutual influences between the Russian and Ukrainian movements has not received the attention it deserves either, although such an approach could provide deeper insight into extremely fertile and interesting periods in the cultural history of both nations. It may have a special significance for the study of visual writing in either of the countries as well.

Ukrainian Constructivists, who entered a cultural and political arena in the 1920s, stressed the role of technology as an important subject of proletarian art and literature. Nonetheless, they were not particularly interested in visual experimentation, undertaken by Russian Constructivists. Articles of Valeriian Polishchuk, the movement's main theoretician,

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[191] More detailed account of visual experiments of Ukrainian Futurists is given in Oleh Ilnytzkyj's article "Visual Dimensions in Ukrainian Futurists Poetry and Prose," *Zeitschift fur Slawistik*, 35:5 (1990): 722-731, and in his book *Ukrainian Futurism, 1914-1930: A Historical and Critical Study*, 323-34.

[192] Semenko, Mykhailo. *Vybrani tvory*. Krifer, L., ed. (analecta slavonica, 23: Würzburg, 1979): 241.

[193] White, John J. *Aspects of the First Avant-Garde*, 265-267.

[194] Mudrak, Myroslava. *The New Generation and Artistic Movement in the Ukraine*, 162.

[195] Mudrak, Myroslava. *The New Generation and the Artistic Modernism in the Ukraine*, 162.

"owed less to Constructivism than to Ukrainian nationalism."[196] Moreover, in the complex political situations of the late 1920s Ukrainian Constructivists, like other avant-gardists, did not have the opportunity to realize their creative plans and dreams.

Despite the apparent concern for visual experimentation of avant-garde writers, it would be irrelevant to view them as conscientious successors of the Baroque tradition. The Russian avant-garde poets who undermined the existing literary norms, including those of text representation, seem to be quite unaware of the existence of any tradition of visual writing in the previous epoch and in the Baroque culture in particular. At least there is no evidence that the creative legacy of Simeon Polotskii and his followers was known by or served as a model for Russian writers of the first quarter of the century. In his survey of such a convoluted question as the premises and origin of the avant-garde art and literature in prerevolutionary Russia, Nikolai Khardziev analyzes several factors which laid the groundwork for the radical reforms of Russian culture. Although he omits one of the most crucial – the impact of technological progress on life-style and creative possibilities – . Khardzhiev mentions the availability of contemporary Western art to the general public of Moscow and Petersburg (through regular exhibitions and two huge collections of modern art owned by Muscovites S. Shchukin and I. Morozov); the regular visits of Russian artists and writers to the West and their collaboration with Western avant-garde groups; regular lectures on visual experiments of French poets and demonstrations of their works.[197] It is not quite clear to what extent Russian Futurists were influenced by their Italian counterparts as the former zealously advocated a total ideological separation from Italian Futurism,[198] especially after Marinetti's visit to Moscow and Petersburg in the winter of 1914. As Vasilii Kamenskii states, Filippo Marinetti's literary manifesto of 1909 was translated by V. Shershenevich only in 1914 and by that date Russian

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[196] Shkandrij, Myroslav. *Modernists, Marxists and the Nation: The Ukrainian Literary Discussion of the 1920s,* 160.

[197] Khardzhiev, Nikolai "Poeziia i zhivopisi". Khardzhiev, Nikolai, Malevich Kazimir, and Matiushin, Mikhail. *K istorii russkogo avangarda,* 22-28, 82.

[198] Russian Formalists and Roman Jacobson in particular also stressed divergence of programs put forward by Italian and Russian movements. See: Jacobson, Roman. *Noveishaia russkaia poeziia. Nabrosok pervyi. Viktor Khlebnikov* (Prague: Politika, 1921), 8.

Futurists had already been extensively publishing, performing and lecturing nationwide for five years.[199] Besides acquisitions of their contemporaries, Russian avant-garde poets were also acquainted with the experiments of ancient Greek and Roman poets, Gothic writers and François Rabelais,[200] and probably were aware of the increased scientific interest in ancient manuscripts at the end of the 19th century, which revitalized palaeographic studies in prerevolutionary Russia.

Nonetheless, there is no direct reference to their awareness of the word-play technique attempted by Russian Baroque poets. Nor did avant-garde poets attempt to develop genres and forms popular in the Baroque period: they set new goals (obviously determined by their time) for themselves and had new technological means to fulfil them. Moreover, the Futurists's visual experiments can be related to visual poetry only if the latter is to be understood in a very broad sense.[201] Thus it would be quite safe to suggest that Futurists would not have followed the path of their Baroque predecessors even if they had been aware of their experiments with the visual dimensions of the text. By its nature Futurism was in apparent opposition – ideologically as well artistically – to the previous literary schools and epochs, which became quite obvious from the first manifesto of its adherents "Poshchechina obshchestvennomu vkusu" issued in December of 1912 and signed by David Burliuk, Kruchenykh, Maiakovskii and Khlebnikov. In this remarkable document Futurists declared that "the Academy and Pushkin are more incomprehensible than hieroglyphics" and called upon the public to "throw Pushkin, Dostoevski, Tolstoi, *et al., et al.*, overboard from the Ship of Modernity."[202] Even their contemporaries Gorkii, Kuprin, Sologub, Blok, Remizov, Averchenko, Kuzmin, Bunin and others did not receive better treatment. In this light any parallels between the Baroque and Futurist aesthetics or formal experiments seem to be impossible; they were made however, by

[199] Kamenskii, Vasilii. *Tango s korovami. Stepan Razin, Zvuchal vesneianki. Put entuziasta,* 445.

[200] See. Nikolai Burliuk's work "Poeticheskie nachala" in *Pervyi zhurnal russkikh futuristov,* 1-2 (1914): 81-3.

[201] Janecek claimed that "the Russians [...] generally avoided figure poetry." Janecek, Gerald. *The Look of Russian Literature: Avant-Garde, Visual Experiments, 1900-1930,* 20.

[202] Markov, Vladimir. *Russian Futurism: A History,* 46.

more than one scholar. In his analysis of Khlebnikov's style, Roman Jakobson alluded to Polotskii's poetic technique; further he found a certain similarity between the palindromes of Khlebnikov and those of Velychkovskyi.[203] Another prominent Russian scholar, Viktor Shklovskii, at the very end of the period of avant-garde experimentation compared the people of his time to those of the Baroque.[204] Further elaboration of this seemingly controversial statement has made made by I. P. Smirnov, who has suggested that, despite the polarity of their semiotic premises, both trends were based on the same system-forming paradox, namely, on the shift of things and signs:

> During the Baroque period the semantic organisation was conditioned by the 'pan-sign' approach to reality and objects of socio-physical nature were equated with the units of the level of expression, which acted as the unknown quantity (unlike units of the level of meaning and the level of reference of the world-text, each of which was perceived as the datum). Futurism, on the contrary, regarded the sign as the quality of the thing; it materialized its semantics and identified ideological reality with socio-physical reality. Nonetheless, it was the signifying side which served as the unknown quantity for both the futurists and the Baroque poets.[205]

Thus, according to Smirnov, the Baroque style and Futurism, which were quite dissimilar in their initial states, reflected different historical realities in a similar way. This might explain such common features of the Baroque and Futurism as the concept of spacial time (resulting, for example, in the popularity of palindromic writing, which signifies reversibility of the time in textual space), the aesthetic principles of asymmetry and disproportion, and the adherence to word-play poetics. Further resemblance between the Baroque style and Futurism may be traced to the numerous stylistic similarities ranging from shared attachment to combinative practice to the iconic interpretation of the verbal sign.[206]

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[203] Jakobson, Roman. *Noveishaia russkaia poeziia. Nabrosok pervyi. Viktor Khlebnikov*, 64-66.

[204] Shklovskii, Viktor. *Poiski optimizma* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Federatsia, 1931), 114-115.

[205] Smirnov, I.P. "Barokko i opyt poeticheskoi kultury nachala XX v." *Slavianskoe barokko: Istoriko-kulturnye problemy epokhi* (Moscow: Nauka, 1979), 337.

The issue of philosophical and artistic links between the Baroque and Futurism is also discussed by Myroslava Mudrak in her monograph on artistic modernism in Ukraine. As she argues, dispite the proclaimed total disengagement from the past[207] both Italian and Ukrainian Futurists had their predecessors in the Baroque period, and this connection should not be ignored. The Baroque period and postrevolutionary Ukraine shared such features as "mass education, along with a rise in national consciousness and nationhood, coupled with a fertile cultural resurgence and experimentation in all forms of art."[208] Among the stylistic devices employed by poets of the two periods, Mudrak mentions the specific style of the message sent to the masses (full of impact, contemporary in feeling and immediate in reception), bilingualism and the fusion of Latin and Cyrillic languages, so characteristic of the Baroque but also reborn in Panfuturist transcription (in which the Ukrainian language was transliterated into a unique code based on the Latin alphabet) (Fig. 49),[209] the usage of Esperanto in the Panfuturist journal *Nova Generatsiia* (*New Generation*), and the attempts to internationalize Ukrainian by introducing borrowings from foreign languages. A more specific correlation between the Baroque and Futurists practice may be observed in Semenko's poezo-painting, which echoed some of the paradigms from Dovhalevskyi's *Horticus Poeticus*.[210]

Both Mudrak's and Smirnov's concepts undoubtedly need further clarification as some of their theses seem overstated and disputable. In general the question of the similarity (whether exterior or essential) of two different epochs and their aesthetic principles, as well as formal acquisitions (in a situation where any conscious or deliberate inheritance is out of question), presents a special interest since the comparative study of two different periods, both of which are marked by the apparent interest in visual experimentation, lays the foundation for the ontological analysis of contemporary visual poetry as well.

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[206] Smirnov, 337-361.

[207] Marinetti's call to destroy museums and libraries concurred with Semenko's wish for 'sincere' Ukrainian art to die, and his quite shocking admittance that he burned his *Kobzar*, the collection of poems by Taras Shevchenko, a prominent Ukrainian Romantic poet.

[208] Mudrak, Myroslava M. *The New Generation and Artistic Movement in the Ukraine*, 183.

[209] Mudrak, 178.

[210] Mudrak, 186-187.

However, even a brief comparative analysis of the Baroque and Futurist technique of verbal message visualiziation suggests considerable differences rather than affinity in the two approaches. Textual manipulations of the Medieval and Baroque poets did not go beyond linguistic juggling, and in their attempts to visualize the text they still did not consider the radical reduction of language and the substitution of hypotaxis by parataxis and ellipsis or even the conversion of the orthodox language into transrational language or *zaum* – "a system of communication which would cross the boundaries of conventional words to establish a universal language which could be intuitively understood"[211] – as unquestionably necessary rhetorical devices. Unlike their Baroque precursors, both Russian and Ukrainian avant-gardists were the first generation of poets in the history of their national literatures to doubt the capacity of conventional language which uses too many words to express the intensity and impetuosity of modern life. As Kornei Chukovskii recorded this demand of the time:

> In the commotion of cities we will have no time to explain ourselves at length and loquaciously, to lavish ten words where just two or three are needed. Words will be compressed, abbreviated, coagulated. They will be quick as lightning and expressive words. [...] There is a terrible waste of verbal energy and we have a need for economy: "we do not have time," – that is a universal motto; it will transform our lazy, Oblomov-like provincial and sluggish language, into a rapid, "telegraphic" speech.[212]

Chukovskii's statement reflects the belief (common among avant-garde poets) in the required correspondence between a new reality – predominantly urban and thus immanently attractive for poets and painters of a lower-middle class provincial background – and new ways of its expression. Maiakovskii, who also insisted that the nervous life of the cities made an apparent demand for "quick, economic and abrupt words," was even more explicit in stating this principle: "We take every existing thing and every arising sensation, and test the correlation between them and their names. If the old words do not seem convincing for us, we create our own words."[213] Thus the search for new forms (which was declared by Futurists far more important than search for new content) was justified and determined by a new reality which could not be expressed in archaic structures — those of "a kind of aristocratic village in Turgenev's style," as Maiakovskii scornfully called them.[214] In their pursuit of dynamic and compressed language Futurists and Constructivists minimalized and concretized the language of poetry to a critical point, from which it then departed to contemporary 'non-semantic' poetry. Medieval and Baroque masters in their exploration of new content and new forms did not go further than the subordination of the textual component to the visual one.

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[211] Elliott, David. *New Worlds: Russian Art and Society 1900-1937* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 14.

[212] Chukovskii, K. *Ego-futuristy i Kubo-futuristy*, 20.

Were new verbal means of expression (including self-sufficient words) always sufficient for the artistic exploration of this dynamic and complex reality? Probably not. Minimalized text freed from the limitations of grammar and syntax and often of an asemantic character tended toward the synthesis of verbal with non-verbal media, namely, painting, graphics, film, theatre, photography, posters, etc. as the supplementary means of elucidating or amplifying the verbal message. As Możejko suggests, the avant-gardist writers' aspiration for the creation of a new metalanguage reflecting a new technological age, took two paths:

> LEF's writers[215] strove to build out of real events a verbal work of art which would be almost tangible. In doing so, they pushed the reification of literature to the maximum by promoting the idea of art as object. Literary constructivists, in trying to achieve precision of description and maximum content in the smallest possible unit of word, proposed to use a variety of means: geometrical

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[213] Maiakovskii, Vladimir. "Bez belykh flagov," *Sobranie sochinenii v dvenadtsati tomakh.* Vol. 11 (Moscow: Pravda, 1978), 51.

[214] Maiakovskii, 51.

[215] LEF (Left Front of Arts) united post-revolutionary artists and writers of various leftists orientation (many of whom began their artistic career as Futurists) who supported Revolution and Bolsheviks. One of the most active member of the group was Maiakovskii.

figures, numbers, new diacritical signs and new printing techniques.[216]

The author of such a multidimensional text, besides his conventional function as creator of the verbal discourse, acquired the new functions of constructor or designer, responsible for engineering the work. The concept of the "artist as engineer,"[217] which in the opinion of Mudrak was realised in the cable greetings characteristic of the Futurists' aesthetics, actually had wider applications for both Futurist and Constructivist creativity. The text, which "ceased to be treated as a mere sign" and "acquired instead an independent functional significance as a material object,"[218] had to be constructed[219] and adjusted to other structural units (or objects) of composition, which required special 'technological' skills or craftsmanship rather than merely the ability to produce a poetic text in accordance with established poetic norms. The same opposition "poet versus engineer" (or constructor or designer -- the contrasting figure may vary considerably) seems very suggestive when applied to the new generation of visual poets, who design poetry rather than write it, and whose creative output will be discussed in the following chapters.

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[216] Możejko, Edward. "The Twisted Bond: Technological Progress and the Evolution of Russian Literary Avant-Garde," *Acta Slavonica Iaponica* XI (1993), 103.

[217] Myroslava Mudrak, *The New Generation and Artistic Movement in the Ukraine*, 162.

[218] Ilnytzkyj, O.S. "Visual Dimensions in Ukrainian Futurists Poetry and Prose," *Zeitschift fur Slawistik,*, 723.

[219] Using the Futurists metaphor "Each word has its odour," Vadim Shershenevich suggested that the poetic goal of the Futurists writer is "to arrange [...] words-odours." See: Shershenevich, Vadim. *Futurizm bez maski* (Letchworth: Prideaux Press, 1974), 57.

# CHAPTER 2. CONTEMPORARY VISUAL POETRY IN RUSSIAN.

Visual poetry in Russian is not confined to contemporary Russian national boundaries. The visual practitioners who write in Russian are scattered throughout Europe and America and are of various ethnic backgrounds. Nonetheless, visual poetry in Russian is a more integral phenomenon than pattern poetry in Ukrainian. It is created by authors of a similar cultural heritage, who still have much in common as former citizens of the Soviet Union. Their first language is Russian and their cultural background is unquestionably Russian despite the fact that many emigrants never resided in Russia, and before leaving the Soviet Union lived in Ukraine, Belarus, and other republics. However, on the vast territory of the Soviet empire Russian has always had a higher status that any national or ethnic minority language in terms of both publication and scholarship. Today the Russian language remains the working language for many expatriate writers, even if some of them simultaneously produce works in English or other adopted languages. Russian expatriate writers of the Soviet period have been traditionally divided into three waves[1]: those who left the country shortly after the October Revolution (the first wave), Second World War refugees (the second wave), and the predominantly Jewish emigration of the 1970-1990s (the third wave). Nonetheless, there is a clear tendency to treat Russian writing, especially that of the 20th century, as a single body of work regardless of the place of initial publication, inasmuch as it "remains a single corpus with a common language, a common heritage, and [...] a common future readership."[2] Unlike Ukrainian, the Russian language is basically uniform, and if there are linguistic differences in the writing of the Russian literati of the first and third waves, they are primarily of a stylistic character. Russian expatriate writers and poets create in a language which is authentically Russian, without any unintentional lexical or grammatical distortions typical of the "discourse accent"[3] of the non-native speakers. This is characteristic of visual practitioners as well.

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[1] Russian literature created outside the boundaries of Russia is usually referred to as literature in exile rather than literature of the diaspora, as it is characteristic of Ukrainian writing. Admittedly this branch of Russian literature began as far back as the 16th century, with Prince Andrei Kurbsky's letters to Ivan the Terrible from Livonia. Each following century made its contribution to the evolution of Russian literature in exile with the 20th century being the most significant in this respect, especially its Soviet period.

[2] Lowe, David. *Russian Writing Since 1953: A Critical Survey* (New York: Ungar, 1987), 6.

It is worth mentioning that visual writing did not seem to have much appeal either for writers of the first or the second wave of emigration, being largely the output of the latest Russian emigrants. The latter, however, do not differ notably from their colleagues in the motherland in ways and methods of exploring the rich potential of visual poetry through the manipulation of pictorial and discursive components. In their works the minimal usage of the language typical of visual poetry does not imply deficiency in literary devices. Nor is the artistic accomplishment of their predecessors always disregarded in favour of Western traditions of visual poetry. Admittedly, the substantial intellectual emigration of the 1970-80s from Russia to Western Europe and Northern America broadened the scope of visual poetry in Russian by impregnating it with new concepts, ideas, and techniques. It would be wrong to state, however, that the concepts and ideas paramount for the evolution of contemporary Russian visual poetry were mainly borrowed from the West. The experience of the Uktuss school which flourished in the 1964-1973 in Sverdlovsk not only in isolation from Western culture but also without any noticeable recognition or support from the Moscow avant-garde elite, proves the opposite. As Anna Ry Nikonova-Tarshis asserts, members of the group did not have access to recent literary and art theories of the West. It is obvious that they tried to pick up any bits of information concerning distant trends, but in general they "were self-sufficient in their self-providing cycle."[4] And yet the achievements of the Uktuss school in developing theories of visual and conceptual writing, "found" art, neoconstructivism, expressionism and even "danemism" (an acronym for the Russian "dialectical non-materialism"), etc., as well as their practical application can hardly be overestimated. Former members of the Uktuss school did not manage to establish contacts with Western avant-garde practitioners and theoreticians until the mid-1980s, during the Gorbachev era. At the same time many expatriate poets established or reestablished close connections with avant-garde poets in Russia, and this cooperation turned out to be mutually beneficial. Various joint projects of Russian visual poets and those who live abroad are another characteristic token of the present time. Expatriate visualists not infrequently endeavour to expose their own works and those of their colleagues from Russia to Western readers.[5] In general, due to the substantial size of the Russian-speaking immigration to the West, the visual experiments in Russian have a much larger readership than those of Ukrainian or any other Slavic visual practitioners.

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[3] Discourse accent is defined "as those characteristics of writing produced by non-native writers which make it different from the writing of native writers." Richards, Jack C, Platt, John, and Platt, Heidi. *Dictionary of Language and Applied Linguistics* (Harlow: Longman, 1992), 111.

[4] Nikonova-Tarshis, Anna Ry. "'Uktusskaia shkola,'" *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 16 (1995): 236.

There is more criticism of visual poetry in Russian, although it is far from adequate from the point of view of writers. One can find scattered comments on experimental or visual poetry in various studies devoted to contemporary Russian literature, but the most consistent and thorough exploration of the subject is given in Gerald Janecek's scholarship focused on works by Sergei Sigei, Ry Nikonova, Elizabeth Netzkowa, Henrikh Aigi and other contemporary Russian practitioners. Among the critical responses to the phenomenon of visual poetry published recently in Russia, Sergei Biriukov's book *Zevgma: Russkaia poeziia ot manerizma do postmodenizma* (*Zeugma: Russian Poetry from Mannerism to Postmodernism*) should be seen as the first attempt in national literary criticism to systematise the most impressive achievements of Russian visual and sound poetry as well as to outline briefly the historical development of nonconventional poetic forms. Designed as a manual for students of literature, the book also contains examples of experimental Russian poetry, typically unknown to the general readership. Several scholarly articles on contemporary Russian visual poetry, as well as on some theoretical issues, are included in a recent collection of essays *Eksperimentalnaia poeziia: izbrannye stati (Experimental Poetry: Selected Articles)* edited by Dmitrii Bulatov.[6] Among Russian contributors to this international project are Sergei Sigel, Sergei Biriukov, Ry Tarshis-Nikonova, and Dmitrii Bulatov. Tatiana Goriacheva, Ekaterina Bobrinskaya, Svetlana Biruikova and Dmitrii Ponomarev contributed works on early twentieth-century Russian visual poetry. Among other Russian scholars who write on visual poetry A. Bubnov, S. Fedin and B. Shifrin should be mentioned. Serious and state-supported journals, however, rarely accept articles on experimental and visual poetry, and *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* stands as one of the few exceptions. Most journals, published by visual practitioners themselves have minimal circulation. In the West the most important and influential journals which regularly publish and review visual poetry are *Chernovik* and *Otrazhenie/ Reflection* . Both these journals are available to the residents of Russia. It should also be mentioned that in the 1980s Russian the émigreé poet Konstantin K. Kuzminsky in collaboration with Gregory L. Kovalev published several volumes of *The Blue Lagoon Anthology of Modern Russian Poetry,*[7] in which several visual poetic pieces were included, as well as the authors' brief biographies and selected comments and articles. However, this is a badly structured facsimile edition lacking an index, bibliography, notes to chapters or any other reference materials typically included in such editions, which makes the anthology is difficult to use. Numerous spelling and typographical mistakes and unclear photographs accompanied by unreadable hand-written inscriptions further prevent its user from referring to this anthology as a reliable source of information, although many entries, if properly arranged and edited, could be quite helpful for research into contemporary Russian experimental poetry.

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[5] Especially important in this context Alexandr Ocheretyansky's on-going edition *Chernovik* and Rafael Levchin's bilingual journal *Reflection/Otrazhenie.*

[6] Bulatov, Dmitrii, ed. *Eksperimentalnaia poeziia: Izbrannye stati* ( Köninsburg-Malbork: Simplitsil, 1996).

Contemporary visual poetry in Russian haddeveloped through more and less productive periods, but in general it has been continuous evolution, unlike that of Ukrainian visual writing. It is not that any form of visual poetry was welcomed in the Soviet Russia. But even in the gloomiest years of purges and stagnation Russian poets occasionally turned to visual poetry, although the authors mainly resorted to its most traditional forms, namely, figured poems, acrostics, and palindromes. Boris Pasternak devoted two acrostics dedicated to another eminent Russian poet Marina Tsvetaeva; the two well-known Russian poets and translators Mikhail Lozinskii and Konstantin Lipskerov used the same form in their correspondence. Both Nikolai Shulgovskii and Yuri Ivask authored pattern poems.[8] Semen Kirsanov composed several visual poems of different subgenres, primarily palindromes and pattern poems. In his poem "Moi nomer"[9] ("My Number," fig. 50) the arrangement of letters and words outlines the silhouette of the clown, inasmuch as the poet compares himself to the circus artist balancing on a wire of a poetic line. Daniil Kharms, Ian Satunovskii, Vladimir Kazakov and others wrote poems with noticeable visual elements. This list can be extended, although it is clear that a certain amount of visual poetry has remained unpublished until recent times. There have been odd stories too. Several editors of different newspapers lost their positions for having overlooked acrostics devoted to party leaders, in spite of the fact that the poems in question were quite neutral in context.[10] Nonetheless, it would be safe to say that the tradition of visual writing in the twentieth century in Russia did not suffer interruptions, though in some decades the creative output of this particular genre was insignificant. A renewal of interest in visual poetry was registered in the 1960s and has continued ever since in Russia, Western Europe and the USA.

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[7] Kuzminsky, Konstantin K., and Kovalev, Gregory L. *The Blue Lagoon Anthology of Modern Russian Poetry* (Newtonville: Oriental Research Partners, 1980-1986).

[8] Biriukov, Sergei. *Zevgma: Russkaia poeziia ot manerizma do postmodernizma* (Moscow: Nauka, 1991), 168; 170.

## VISUAL POETRY IN RUSSIA

In his survey "Kratkaia istoriia vizualnoi poezii v Rossii" ("A Brief History of Visual Poetry in Russia"), Sergei Sigei underlines two important tendencies which have been developed in Russian visual poetry since the late 1960s: experimentation with typography, and visualization by the materiality and organization of the constituents.[11] It should be kept in mind, however, that by visual poetry Sigei means a specific kind of art which "begins with the material"[12] in contrast to various means of visualization of verse, usually referred to by scholars and practitioners as visual poetry as well. As Sigei further explains, "visual poetry is not poetry at all. As far as its performative basis is concerned. . . I have such a piece, a poem, a coloured thing with letters, and I send it for publication, but in addition I attach a photograph of how this poem has been made. I paint three letters on my stuck out chest. I then take the paper, put it to my chest; whatever has been imprinted is the poem. There is a photograph of the process. Interestingly, if the performers / publishers accept the work for publication, they will publish only the photograph, but not the result, the print off my chest, which they ignore. However, if the same work is to be published by visual poets, they ignore the photograph, they are not interested in the process of production. This is a mistake, howver, inasmuch as the visual poem is both, the photograph at the corner of the sheet, and the sheet itself."[13] It is obvious that Sigei' definition of pure visual poetry excludes the huge corpus of works in which visualization is understood as "the expressed spaciality of speech."[14] Sigei's postulate that whatever is produced on the paper is by no means visual poetry[15] cuts off the long history of visual writing and in fact proclaims visual poetry to be a phenomenon of the most recent times.

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[9] Biriukov, 169.

[10] Biriukov, 15-16.

[11] Sigei, Sergei. "Kratkaia istoriia vizualnoi poezii v Rossii." *Eksperimentalnaia poeziia: Izbrannye stati,* 65-67.

[12] Sigei, Sergei, and Ryklin, Mikhail. "O prirode visualnoi poezii," *Chernovik* 3 (1990): 22.

In this light the history of Russian visual poetry was originated in the creative output of Aleksei Chicherin,[16] who was the first among twentieth-century avant-gardists to extend the visualization of the text to extralinguistic dimensions of the material product. As V. Kulakov argues, for Chicherin "the texture and corporality of the word as the object is more important than its exterior linguistic relationship."[17] It is known that Chicherin's poem "Aveki vikof" existed in the form of a gingerbread, of which 15 copies were produced, sold and most likely eaten by the buyers. According to Sigei, Chicherin's gingerbread is an example of visual poetry, while whatever is created by a typing machine apparently is not.[18] Naturally, the majority of Russian scholars and visual practitioners do not share this opinion and tend to include various forms of textual visualization in the body of visual poetry. Therefore, the two important tendencies mentioned by Sigei should be seen as complicated by other trends, including various approaches to a minimal two-dimensional text and its structural organization, as exemplified by the works of Anna Alchuk, Igor Kholin, Henrikh Sapgir, Dmitrii Bulatov and others. Many of these trends cannot be viewed as entierly new in Russian visual writing after the Futurists' and Constructivists' zealous experimentation, although visual performance (the two principal contemporary proponents and promulgators of this creative form are Sergei Sigei and Ry Nikonova) at the beginning of the century existed only in an embryonic stage.[19] It should be remembered, however, that general readers, as well as students of literature and art, have remained unaware of even the most striking aspects of Russian avant-gardist iconography, typography or book design after it had been suppressed in the 1930s. They have been denied access to theoretical works by Russian avant-garde poets and artists, and to their poetic works and albums, which were usually published in a very limited number of copies. In addition, many of these works have never been reprinted since their initial publication in the 1910s or 1920s. For instance, the typographical experiments of Iuri Marr dated from the 1920-30s, or the copy of Aleksandr Tufanov's book "Ushkuiniki" (this word was invented by the author and is untranslatable) of 1926 in which all letter "o" is everywhere replaced by a so-called "suprematist colon" (two vertically arranged black squares), became known only at the beginning of the 1980s.[20] Aleksei Chicherin's principle of substituting words according to their graphic representations (or construction) with the result of turning the poetry into geometrical compositions, as well as his other radical ideas developed in *Mena vsekh*[21] and *Kan-fun*[22] have never been held in high regard even by his fellow-Constructivists, and thus played a minor role in both literary Constructivism and Soviet literature of the following decades.[23] El Lissitzky's theories of modern typography and spatial dynamics,[24] the most impressive expressions of which became his children's book *Pro dva kvadrata* (*Story of Two Squares)* published in 1922, and *Dlia Golosa* (*For the Voice*, 1923), have not made a notable impact on Russian book design either.

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[13] Sige, and Ryklin., 29-30.

[14] Nekrasov, Vsevolod. "Obiasnitelnaia zapiska." qtd. in Kulakov, V. "Vizualnost' v sovremennoi poezii" minimalizm i maksimalizm," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 16 (1995): 253.

[15] Sigei, Sergei; Ryklin, Mikhail. "O prirode vizualnoi poezii," 23.

[16] In his article "Fragmenty polnoi formy" (*Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 16, 1995) Sigei mentions Russian count Khvostov who in the first part of the 19th century made his serves carve his poems on marble slabs and bury them. As Sigei comments, "it might not be the very beginning."

[17] Kulakov, V. "Vizualnost v sovremennoi poezii: minimalizm i maksimalizm," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 16 (1995): 253.

[18] Sigei, Sergei, and Ryklin, Mikhail. "O prirode vizualnoi poezii," 22.

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[19] Sergei Sigei mentions Futurist, Dadaist and other avant-garde performers, as well as the "Oberiuty" (Daniil Kharms, Aleksandr Vvedenskii, Nikolai Zabolotskii and other poets of surrealist and expressionist orientation) as their predecessors. Sigei, Sergei. "Fragmenty polnoi formy," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 16 (1995): 302.

[20] Sigei, Sergei. "Kratkaia istoriia vizualnoi poezii v Rossii," *Eksperimentalnaia poeziia: Izbrannye stati,* 63-65.

[21] Zelinskii, Kornelii, Chicherin, Aleksei, and Selvinskii, Ellii-Karl. *Mena vsekh* (Moscow: Konstruktivisty poety, 1924).

[22] Chicherin, Aleksei. *Kan-fun* (Moscow: Tsekh poetov, 1926).

[23] Weber, Gale. "Constructivism and Soviet Literature," *Soviet Union* 3 (1976): 296.

Many interesting if not unique ideas in the domain of typography and design, as well as spectacular projects by Russian avant-garde writers and artists sank into oblivion soon after the suppression in the 1930s of any literary or artistic movement that could not be described as Socialist Realism when, after the First Union Congress of Soviet Writers (held in Moscow in 1934), regulative measures were imposed on art, literature, and criticism. Only a few copies of original works by avant-garde poets and artists which have survived and which did not belong to private book collections, have been kept exclusively in special book depositories (*spetskhrany*) open only to a limited number of the Soviet critics of the highest rank, whose faithfulness to "the basic method of Soviet literature and literary criticism"[25] – Socialist Realism – was not questioned by the Communist Party and the Soviet state. It is not surprising that devoted apologists of "the truthful, historically concrete representation of reality in its revolutionary development"[26] have not had much concern for the dubious output of Russian avant-garde writers and artists, many of whom were executed, forced to emigrate, perished or died, or eagerly pledged their support to the totalitarian Soviet regime, like the former members of Literaturnyi tsentr konstruktivistov (the Literary Center of Constructivists), Kornelii Zelinskii, Illia Selvinskii, Eduard Bagritskii, and Vera Inber. In general, the whole avant-guarde movement with its most spectacular achievements was so completely and so quickly forgotten that it had to be literally rediscovered during the period of the so-called thaw of the 1960s,[27] when Soviet society experienced a short phase of cultural liberalization. But even during this period, marked by easing of constraints in Stalinist cultural policy, Russian practitioners of visual poetry did not have much access to either the theoretical works or the practical experiments of their foreign colleagues. Concrete poems by the progenitor of this form Eugen Gomringer, who most actively worked on the creation and development of the new poetic form in 1950-60, was published in a popular Russian literary edition no sooner than in 1969. As Mikhail Sukhotin admits, in the 1950s-1960s, when Igor Kholin, Henrikh Sapgir, Ian Satunovskii and other Russian practitioners began to explore the potential of concretism, they knew nothing about the German Group 47, of which Eugen Gomringer was a member.[28] The 1960s Fluxus artists who consciously experimented with the visual properties of language remained unknown to the majority of visualists until recent times. Not surprisingly, revolutionary works in typography and other visual forms of communication, including those of Jan Tschichold, wereas not known to Russian audiences either. An innocent Russian readership and artistic community (the latter was regularly blamed for thoughtless attempts to lose its intellectual virginity), were thoroughly protected by the totalitarian regime from 'freakish' Western aberrations of various natures. Thus, on one hand, "historico-political exigencies prevented the organic development [...] toward the achievement of a full-fledged 'visual poetry' in Russia,"[29] or at least delayed the process until recent times. On the other hand, this situation put several generations of poets who were interested in various forms of visualization of poetic discourse in a most unfavourable position of becoming 'reinventors of a wheel.' Without having access to works of either their Russian predecessors or their foreign contemporaries, visual poets of the Soviet Union had to rely exclusively on their own imagination and creative ambitions. Limitedn resources, however, by no means decreased the significance of the results obtained by contemporary visualists, many of whom successfully developed the creative principles first set by avant-garde writers, and initiated their individual experiments within the particular context of modern typography and design. However, it should be mentioned that even today Russian practitioners are considerably less fortunate than their Western colleagues in those areas of poetic creativity which are facilitated by modern technology and multimedia. Even for those who feel that traditional means are not sufficient for expressing what they want to express, the impossibility of changing the medium remains one of the most serious limitations on their creativity.

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[24] Barron; Stephanie, and Tuchman, Maurice, eds. *The Avant-Garde in Russia: 1910-1930: New Perspectives* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Museum of Art, 1980), 184-189.

[25] Materialy Pervogo Vsesoiuznogo S"ezda Sovetslikh pisatelei (Moscow: 1934), 716.

[26] Materialy, 716.

[27] Terras, Victor. "The Twentieth century: the era of socialist realism, 1925-53," Moser, Charles, ed. *The Cambridge History of Russian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 473.

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[28] Sukhotin, Mikhail. "O dvukh sklonnostiakh napisannykh slov," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 16 (1995): 247.

[29] Janecek, Gerald. *The Look of Russian Literature: Avant-Garde Visual Experiments, 1900-1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 206.

Paradoxically, Russian visual compositions that are best known nationally and internationally, have been created by the poet who has established a reputation as master of conventional poetry, and who is not considered a visual poet by many other practitioners. Andrei Voznesenskii belongs to a small group of contemporary Russian literati who, besides national recognition, are well-known abroad. From the beginning of his poetic career in the 1960s, he has been acknowledged as one of the most technically accomplished Russian poets, fascinated by formal experimentation with rhymes, metric structure, sound effects and visual imagery. Yet paradoxically his brilliant and sophisticated technical achievement makes many critics conclude that Voznesenskii's works sacrifice inner essence or content for the sake of purely formal tricks.[30] Neither an analysis nor an overview of Voznesenskii's conventional poetry is the goal of the present study. However, it is worth suggesting that Voznesenskii's interest in pattern poetry and visual compositions (or "videoms" according to the terminology of the author) was most probably derived from the conviction that the content as such should not have a privileged status in poetry. In Voznesenskii's poetic writing, content has never had such a status, inasmuch as the poet seems to believe that the poetic construct should be based on a solid armature of a form in order to exist.[31]

Voznesenskii's experimentation with visual writing began as early as the late 1960s. In 1970 Voznesenskii he included his pattern poems or "poems for eyes exclusively" in contrast to poetry for recitation in his selection *Ten zvuka*[32] (*The Shadow of a Sound*). He called these visual forms "izopy," which is an acronym for *opyty izobrazitelnoi poezii* ("experiments in graphic poetry"), and even provided his readers with a brief comment on his attempts "to turn the verbal metaphor into a graphically visible one."[33] Thus, the poet's composition "Chaika – plavki Boga"[34] ("Seagull – God's Swimming Trunks," fig. 51) is his artistic response to the theme of walking on the water, initiated by the biblical story from the *Gospel According to Matthew.*[35] The invisible figure walking on the water can be reconstructed in the reader's imagination from a visible and material constituent, the approaching white triangle of the seagull, gliding between the sea and the sky, and visually resembling swimming trunks.[36] The pictorial image of the seagull alone, however, does not call for association with the Biblical story,[37] although it may open other avenues for the reader's interpretation of the work. Spacial word arrangement schematically depicts the object which can be taken for the body of a seagull, but it is the verbal message that conveys the main idea of the composition and initiates the reader's reflection in the direction suggested by the poet. In the pattern poem "Boi petukhov" ("Cock's Fight") the visual component is perceived as self-sufficient, inasmuch as this component clearly represents the author's intention (fig. 52) Nonetheless, this pattern poetry is a visual variant or illustration of the conventional poem under the same title.[38] The

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[30] See: Grinberg, I. "Postoiannaia izmeniaiemost," *Voprosy literatury* 2 (1965): 33-4; Rassadin, Stanislav. "Pokhozhena vse nepokhozhe," *Voprosy literatury* 4 (1965): 56-72; Svirsky, Grigory, *Na lobnom meste: literatura nravstvennogo soprotivleniia:1946-1976* (London: Novaya Literaturnaya Biblioteka, 1979), 422.

[31] Even the figure of Lenin, idolized by Soviet literature, has receivezd unconventional treatment in Voznesenskii's quite conformist poem "Lonzhiumo" on the Leninist theme. The sacredness of the theme has not prevented the poet from experimentation, which became an integral part of Voznesenskii's poetic discourse.

[32] Voznesenskii, Andrei. *Ten zvuka* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1970), 155-165.

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[33] Voznesenskii, 157.

[34] *Ten zvuka,* 163. In the late 1970s Voznesenskii made two autholitographies based on this visual poem. See: Voznesenskii Andrei. *Videomy* (Moscow: RIK "Kultura," 1992), 344-45. The translation of this visual poem into English by Canadian author Andrew Suknatski will be discussed in Chapter 3.

[35] Matthew, 14: 28-31.

[36] Voznesenskii, Andrei. *Ten zvuka,* 159-160. The same poem with a slight correction (comparison of the torn off cock's head to the Order of the Red Banner, one of the highest Soviet awards, instead of the neutral "kak petushinyi orden s grebnem," meaning "like cock's order with a comb") appears in the poet's later selection *Videomy,* 317, 319.

[37] The mere fact that the noun "God" is not capitalized makes Voznesenskii's work "blasphemous," as Konstantin Kuzminsky suggests (Kuzminsky; Konstantin K., and Kovalev, Gregory. *The Blue Lagoon: Anthology of Modern Poetry.* Vol. 3Б, 1986, 564). However, it should be kept in mind that regardless of the author's intention, in the official Soviet press the above-mentioned word has never been capitalized.

[38] In Voznesenskii's *Ten zvuka* both the poem and its visual variant are presented. In the poet's *Videomy* of 1992 the pattern poem is absent, although "Boi petukhov" is included in the selection.

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words and onomatopoeic exclamations from the first stanza of the poem are used as structural blocks for the visual composition shaped as a decapitated tousled cock, whose head (visually composed from Russian letters naming it) appears on the next page. In the pattern poem the sentence conventions of the traditional poetic discourse are replaced by spatial arrangement, which is used as a means of visualizing the cock fight through the visible process of words colliding, crashing, and being torn apart. The initial poetic text can be reconstructed from the dispersed sentence fragments and words of the pattern poem, although the poet includes some new discursive elements in his visual composition. One of them, for instance, is the name of the cock "Kir," whose head has been cut off by the cook.[39] The cock's name never appears in the conventional poetic text, but is presented in the pattern poem and referred to in the poet's commentaries. Voznesenskii's visual composition based on the first stanza of his poetic text is also accompanied by two other stanzas from the poem, important for the clarification of the author's idea. This approach can be justified by the assumption that the concrete poem "explores elements of language itself rather than [...] uses language to explore something else,"[40] and therefore its message *per se* is not necessarily sufficient for comprehension of the author's idea. Thus two stanzas included in visual composition function as clues for interpretation of the pictorial image and its specific details, and to a certain extent reduce the status of the pattern poem to that of on illustration of the conventional poetic text. This conjunction of two modes of representation characteristic of different forms of poetry (visual and conventional) within the framework of the same composition occurs more than once in Voznesenskii's creative output, although in general it is not very typical for Russian visual poetry.

Visible materiality, as one of the most crucial facets of Voznesenskii's poetic world, has culminated in his selections *Aksioma samoiska*[41], *Videomy*,[42] and *Casino "Rossia,"*[43] of which the lavish colourful edition in the large format *Videomy* (published in 1000 copies) is probably the most impressive. In addition to early pattern poems created in the 1970s, the author includes in the album his recent visual compositions of which the cycle "Vidukhi" presents a special interest. The majority of compositions of the cycle are visualized portraits of Russian, American and British writers and poets created by means of mixed technique. Voznesenskii's concern is not so much with physical resemblance to the prototype (although some of his videoms emphasize characteristic features of the individual's portrait, as it occurs in the composition dedicated to Allen Ginsberg[44]), but rather with the creative and psychological profile of the character, or his fate, codified in the name itself. The idea of implicit correspondence between the given name and the fate of its bearer received its detailed treatment in the philosophical writings of the Reverend Pavel Florenskii, the well-known Russian cultural historian, theologian and philosopher, who perished in one of Stalin's labour camps in 1937. In the late 1960s Voznesenskii received the opportunity of studying Florenskii's works,[45] which then influenced his creative practice.

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[39] Voznesenskii, Andrei. *Ten zvuka*, 160.

[40] Waldrop, Rosmarie. "A Basis for Concrete Poetry," Kostelanetz, Richard, ed. *The Avant-Garde Tradition in Literature* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1982), 316.

[41] Voznesenskii, Andrei. *Aksioma samoiska* (N.p.: SP IKPA, 1990).

[42] Voznesenskii, Andrei. *Videomy.* (N.p.: RIK "Kultura," 1992).

According to Florenskii, the name is the substance of the object, its spermatic logos and inner rational essence , and in this capacity the name is the essence of a human being and his alter ego.

> The name is the materialization, the clot of beneficial or occult forces, the mystical root, which ties a human being to other worlds. And therefore, the name is the tenderest and the most sensitive part of a person. More than that, the name is the mythical individuality of the person, his transcendental self. But even this does not express the multiplicity of the name's reality. "The name is a certain creature, parallel to a human being, which is relatively independent of its bearer but very important for his well-being and misfortune inasmuch as

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[43] Voznesenskii, Andrei. *Casino "Rossia"* (Moscow: Terra, 1997).

[44] Voznesenskii, Andrei, *Videomy*, 87.

[45] Voznesenskii, 9. Even before his acquaintance with the Reverend Florenskii's doctrine, the poet attempted to trace the link between the person's name and his fate or destination in his poetic cycle "Portret Plisetskoi" ("The Portrait of Plisetskaia"), dedicated to the famous Soviet ballerina. See: Voznesenskii, Andrei. *Ten zvuka*, 141-51.

> it represents its bearer and influences him." (Guizebrecht). Thus, it is not the name that is attached to the human being, but the human being who is attached to the name. The name is a special creature [...] which gives life and may be favourable or hostile to a human being.[46]

Nurtured by Florenskii's concept, Voznesenskii attempted to analyze and visualize the essence of the individual names of well-known representatives of world culture in his cycle of visual compositions "Vidukhi" (the word suggests the comprehension of spirituality through video or visual images[47]) and the cycle devoted to Boris Pasternak, the eminent Russian poet and the author's mentor. In his endeavour to penetrate the name's deep meaning and grasp the hidden bond between the name itself and the individual fate of its bearer, the author resorts to the structural (both morphological and phonetic) disintegration of the name and its further analysis through paronomasia, approximation, syllepsis and other techniques instrumental in decoding the signified message. Voznesenskii's remotivations are often of a symbolic nature, inasmuch as the author attaches meanings within the framework of the same composition on more than one isotopic level. As far as their visual dimensions are concerned, Voznesenskii's videoms combine unorthodox typography and message design with various forms of mixed technique, and many of his original works are volumetric. As a rule in inscriptions to videoms (presented as photographs of three dimensional compositions), the material (wood, satin, glass) or specific technology (stroboscopic light) is mentioned. Ready-made objects are also not infrequently integrated in the compositions; for instance, a small cube with an orange inside (alluding to the well-known opera), a coffee grinder resembling the Kremlin dome, and coffee beans are important elements of the videom devoted to the composer Sergei Prokofief, whose name "rather strongly suggested coffee."[48] The theme of Proust suggests a magnifying glass; the code of Oscar Wilde's name makes a white satin bow and a top hat imperative elements of the composition; and the videom dedicated to Allen Ginsberg incorporates Ginsberg's spectacles and handcuffs, the latter symbolising various restrictions, taboos and prohibitions for the poet to break. This list is not exhaustive, although Voznesenskii's videoms include many two dimensional works as well.

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[46] Florenskii, Pavel. *Opravdanie kosmosa* (St-Petersburg: No p., 1994), 52.

[47] Voznesenskii, Andrei. *Videomy*, 14.

[48] Voznesenskii, 73.

In the composition "Esenin i Aisedora"[49] ("Esenin and Isadora", fig. 53) the interlaced rope (shaped as the initial "E" of the poet's name) and white scarf (resembling the horizontally arranged letter "I") symbolically allude to the untimely deaths of both the famous Russian imagist poet Sergei Esenin, who hanged himself in a hotel room in 1925, and his ex-wife, the American dancer Isadora Duncan, who was choked by a scarf wound around the wheel of her car. The name of the poet *Esenin* undergoes morphological paronomastic transformation which results in the adjective *vesennii* rhyming with the poet's name and meaning "vernal"[50] in the suggested combination *vesennii poet* ("the spring poet") which hints at the poet's individual character, as well as the nature of his lyrical talent as the glorifier of nature, romantic love, harmonious peasant life and religious faith. The bright colour-scheme of the composition (bright blue and white background, golden rope) probably alludes to the truly remarkable appearance of Esenin as a blonde curly-haired handsome Lel, a young companion of the Spring in Russian folklore, or a "golden-haired" prince of a Russian fairy-tale.[51] The adjective *vesennii* is further transformed into its poetic synonym *veshnii* to be converted at the next step into the short participle *poveshen* ("hanged"), the first syllable of which *po* goes with two morphological units *veshen* and *et*, thus forming two words *poet* and *poveshen* in the manner characteristic of the Baroque coordinated poem. Some letters in this word chain are not clearly printed, thus creating the effect of reticence or innuendo associated with the life and death of the poet. In contrast Isadora's name is printed in small but clear letters beneath the scarf edge, the white initial "I" being placed slantwise, further alluding to the accident. Her name is rhymed with the word combination *zhertva avtodora* ("a victim of the highway"), thus suggesting the prediction of her tragic death by her name.

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[49] Voznesenskii, 8.

[50] Golden-haired and handsome Esenin had the reputation of reckless, quick-tempered, spontaneous and childish person; in Russian culture these qualities are associated with youth, of which spring is the symbol.

[51] In Valentin Kataev's fictionalized memoirs Sergei Esenin appears under the pseudonym of "korolevich," meaning "king's son" or "prince." See: Kataev, Valentin. *Almaznyi moi venets* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel, 1979). Voznesenskii himself mentions that Boris Pasternak also characterized Esenin as a smiling *korolevich-kudriavich* ("a prince with curly hair"). See: Voznesenskii, Andrei. *Aksioma samoiska*, 322.

The contemplative spirit of Esenin's videom is in contrast to the composition dedicated to Esenin's major poetic rival of the 1920s, futurist Vladimir Maiakovskii[52] (Fig. 54). The work itself shows definite affinity to the propaganda posters for the screens of the Russian Telegraph Society (ROSTA), many of which were produced by Maiakovskii himself. The rectangular scarlet background of the composition obviously symbolizes the red banner as an essential attribute of Soviet power, enthusiastically supported by Maiakovskii, who joined the Bolshevik party and began his subversive activity several years before the Revolution. The relationship of the poet with state power, so zealously supported through his poetry, ROSTA posters, and rhymed advertisements for state consumer goods stores (not to mention his role in founding the Left Front of Art organization), was not always cloudless. In 1930 the poet committed suicide in response both to gradually increasing pressure for conformity and to personal problems. The central visual image of the poem is the stylized revolver with the whimsically codified name of the poet. In fact, Maiakovskii's last name emerges two times on the revolver's body. First of all, letters of Maiakovskii's name are arranged clockwise on the revolver's drum with a single bullet in it. In addition, the individual parts of the revolver (the trigger, the barrel, and the sights, etc.) also correspond to the letters of Maiakovskii's name, thus emphasizing the theme of suicide as the central one for understanding the poet's fate. Stalin himself granted the title of the best poet of the Soviet era to Maiakovskii posthumously, for his long-lasting loyalty to the ruling party. The letter *Ia*, the third letter of Maiakovskii's last name functions as the literal and symbolic centre of the composition, inasmuch as it corresponds to the personal pronoun "I," thus suggesting another probable meaning. In his brief commentary on the composition Voznesenskii hints at the utmost egocentrism of the poet, decoded in his name,[53] which can be revealed through metaplasm by synoptic suppression in the following verbal chain *Ia – Kosmos – Moskva – moski – sovok! – Osia – samo* . . . This associative chain can be rendered as "I – Cosmos – Moscow – pug-dogs (paltry creatures which dare to bark at the elephant to prove their own importance in the well-known fable by the Russian writer Ivan Krylov) followed by the derogatory slang word for the Soviet citizen. The last two components of this verbal sequence are the diminutive name of Osip Brick, the husband of Maiakovskii's lover Lily Brick, and the semi-prefix *samo* meaning "self," which is also the initial component of the Russian nouns *samoubiitsa* and *samoubiistvo* (both meaning "suicide"). Consequently, the circle is closed. This destructive analysis of the poet's last name attempted by Voznesenskii concurs with the *ia*-centred revolver outline.

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[52] Voznesenskii, Andrei. *Videomy*, 16.

[53] Voznesenskiiv, 14.

At the bottom of his work Voznesenskii endeavours to explain reasons for the poet's tremendous popularity due to his having committed suicide at the proper time. The mathematical-type equation at the bottom of the composition reads *Poet* + *pulia* = *populiarnost* ("Poet + Bullet = Popularity"), in which the root of the word *populiarnost* is formed through the addition of structural morphemes of the equation. Therefore, Voznesenskii's response to Maiakovskii's posthumous popularity is unequivocal: if it were not for the lethal consequence of playing Russian roulette, Maiakovskii could not be popular and famous as a poet. It is true that when dead Maiakovskii was officially canonized and idolized, but should the poet survive, even his highly propagandistic poetry would not guarantee him the favour of the ruling power. The tragic fate of many Russian poets and writers of the first part of the century attests to this. It is not surprising, however, that out of two components comprising the root of the noun *populiarnost* only the second one, *pulia*, is fully incorporated in the body of the word, whereas the word *poet* contributes only the first syllable. Two final letters of the noun *poet* appear as clippings from the newspaper *Pravda* with the visible title on the letter surface. This visual device further stresses the late Maiakovskii's practical commitment to political art, which is often of dubious aesthetic value. But it is the ideologically biased poetry of Maiakovskii that has always been over-emphasized by official culture at the expense of the poet's love lyrics. In this sense Voznesenskii's assessment of Maiakovskii's propagandistic outcome contradicts that of the official view. But this judgment does not necessarily mean, however, that the author, for whom Maiakovskii's influence is traditionally considered to be an important factor of creativity,[54] attempts to throw down the idol. Nor does it signify the total rejection of Maiakovskii's poetic legacy. It is the enforced canonization of the poet with little regard for the actual quality of his poetic writing with which Voznesenskii takes issue with. It is not surprising that introducing the noun *populiarnost* ("popularity") as one of the key-words of Maiakovskii's destiny, Voznesenskii immediately emphasizes the transitory nature of the phenomenon by using chipped-looking letters in the equation. For years Maiakovskii's works rolled off the presses in the Soviet Union in huge runs. However, the collapse of the empire and noticeable changes in Russian censorship and cultural policy have now brought other poets into the focus of public attention. Sensitive to the political climate and state of the market, Voznesenskii responded to new directions of Russian reality with his videom.

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[54] Altshuller, Mark. "Russian Poetry," *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Ed. Alex Preminger, and T. V. F. Brogan (New York: MJF Books, 1993), 1111.

The motif of death as a typical poet's fate in Soviet Russia receives its most concise treatment in the composition dedicated to the leader of Russian acmeists Nikolai Gumilev,[55] who is also known as the first Russian poet executed by the Soviet regime as early as 1921 (Fig. 55). On the same rectangular scarlet background, seven letters of Gumilev's surname are horizontally arranged in a traditional manner. The typeface is very simple, although the black paint of some letters slightly cracks and peels off as suffering from old age. Crumbling paint and the banner-like background are two markers of the passages of time; they visibly set the distance between the reader and the visualized time. Voznesenskii does not resort to other typographical devices, nor does he attempt to incorporate purely visual details in this laconic discourse. Death, however, is physically perceptible in two lacerated bullet holes which are integral parts of the iotized stressed *e* in Gumilev's name. To a certain extent this undisguised visual image reflects Gumilev's own attitude to death as revealed in his poem "Moi chitateli" ("My Readers"), written in the last year of his life. In this poem Gumilev meditates on his relationship with his readers whom the poet neither insults with his sick nerves, nor embarrasses by his heartfelt feeling. Nor does he bore them "with pregnant hints about what's left in an egg when it's eaten."[56] Instead, the poet teaches them how in the most difficult situations "not to be afraid, and to do what must be done."[57] Inasmuch as death is the crucial experience of a human being's existence Gumilev teaches his readers:[58]

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[55] Voznesenskii, Andrei. *Videomy*, 54-55.

[56] Raffel, Bytron, and Burago, Alla, eds. *Selected Works of Nikolai S. Gumilev* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1972), 125.

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| . . . predstav pered likom Boga | . . how to stand in God's |
| S prostymi i mudrymi slovami | presence and speak simple, wise words, |
| Zhdat spokoino Ego suda. . .[59] | and wait, calm, for His Judgement. . .[60] |

The pictorial and textual laconicism of Gumilev's execution does not present it as less tragic. And the scarcity of both visual and verbal means is probably conditioned by the impossibility of visualizing the implied background material which is related to Gumilev's death. Well-known factual details, such as the official denunciation of Gumilev's first wife, the Acmeist poet Anna Akhmatova, the imprisonment and lengthy banishment of their son Lev, the emigration, prosecution or untimely death of many poets of the Silver Age, including members of Gumilev's Acmeist group Mikhail Kuzmin and Osip Mandelshtam, remain behind the frame of the composition. And yet they are implicit in this ascetic image of the death of the Russian officer and poet: the red banner, symbolizing the colour of blood, not so much of the blood already shed but rather the blood still to be shed, has already been hoisted. Shots at Gumilev are just the beginning, an adjustment of fire, which soon will be directed at Russian intellectuals, cultural activists, military and party leaders, in other words, at the flower of the nation. The fact that Gumilev, a victim of individual and not mass execution, was not buried in accordance with Christian ritual which cinflicted with Bolshevik ideology, the aggressive symbol of which is the scarlet banner, has its sorrowful implications as well. In this context, sparse details of Voznesenskii's videom symbolize the large-scale tragedy of the whole country, and Gumilev, as a Parnassian poet and a man of high culture and the bearer of the code of honesty and other essential moral values inherent in the Russian officer, appears to be the symbol of the best qualities of national character to be ruined in the near future and sent to oblivion for several long decades. In his commentaries to this videom, Voznesenskii writes:

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[57] Raffel, 125.

[58] Voznesenskii, Andre. *Videomy*, 57.

[59] Gumilev, Nikolai. *Stikhotvoreniia i poemy* (Moscow: Sovremennik, 1989), 365.

[60] Raffel, Bytron, and Burago, Alla, eds. *Selected Works of Nikolai S. Gumilev*, 126.

"and who knows, our country may be still paying for this sin, for the annihilation of the intelligentsia, the fund of genetic spirituality, and all our disasters may be the requital for the killed."[61] Voznesenskii's fascination with the fate-bearing name of Russian poets, many of whom became martyrs of the Soviet system, is continued in videoms dedicated to Osip Mandelshtam[62] (who perished in the labour camps after having written a poem on his namesake, Iosif Stalin), Nikolai Zabolotskii[63] (repressed by the Central Committee of the Communist party), Anna Akhmatova and other prominent poets to be crowned by the Pasternak cycle, which deserves a separate study.

The same correspondence between the name and the fate of its bearer is also visualized in several videoms with apparent ironic connotation. Igor Severianin (Igor Lotarev's pseudonym), the leader of Russian Ego-Futurists, is labelled by Voznesenskii "a bedroom lyricist," and such a characterization influences the choice of verbal and visual (or material) means for the appropriate videom[64] (Fig. 56) The author of the videom freely mixes styles and combines elevated words of salon poetry (mostly describing nature) with everyday non-poetic vocabulary (*insect, v iar!* respectively meaning "incest" and "in a ravine!"; *v SSSR,* that means "in the Soviet Union," etc.). Borrowings from foreign languages are also incorporated in the poetic text; and macaronism of Voznesenskii's discourse can be related to Severianin's preoccupation with words of French origin, which serve as a basis for his remarkable neologisms.[65] What is no less interesting is a witty word-play on the poet's name which allows Voznesenskii to extricate several key-words from it, phonetically reminiscent of the poet's pen name, Severianin, which are simultaneously crucial for understanding Severianin's nature and poetic style. Thus the twice repeated noun *siren* ("lilac") stands for the favourite flower of Severianin, but also begins with the same letter as the poet's name; *Vera* is the name of the poet's last love, and in addition this female name echoes that of the poet, Severianin. The noun *sneg* ("snow") alludes to the denotation of the poet's pen name meaning "Northerner," while the French noun *verse* refers to Severianin's vocation, being at the same time the outcome of reading the first two syllables of the poet's pseudonym in reverse order. The note *si* at the very top of the work, besides indicating the poet's initials, probably refers to Severianin 'musical poems' and to his particular manner of reciting or singing them.[66] This list of verbal puns incorporated in the composition is far from being exhaustive. Although at first sight some words in Voznesenskii's composition are perceived as occasional and unmotivated (as if emerginh spontaneously on the surface of the image), every sign in this constellation of attributes relates in some way to the poet's pen name, his creative manner or his destiny, and adds a new trait to his artistic and personal profile. In general, the linguistic play attempted by Voznesenskii mimics Severianin's own experimentation with words.

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[61] Raffei, 51.

[62] Voznesenskii, Andrei. *Videomy,* 64-65.

[63] Voznesenskii, 118-119.

[64] Voznesenskii, 20-21, 23.

[65] Markov, Vladimir. *Russian Futurism: A History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 63.

The composition is also remarkable in regard to its typography and design, both being eclectic. In addition to his customary technique imitating cracked and crumbled paint, Voznesenskii introduces transparent snow-white letters which are cut out of rice-paper and thus resemble thin and translucent tulle or lace drapery of the boudoir. This impression is intensified by another integral element of the composition, the white bra, the semantics of which do not require any elucidation. The specific atmosphere of "bonbonières, porcelain and lacy"[67] recall the world of Severianin's lyrics. This micro-world of Severianin is visually emphasized by the conglomeration of overlapping letters and lines, squeezed into the relatively small triangle in the centre of the composition. In addition to various typefaces and letter sizes Voznesenskii introduces handwriting patterns, all being of a refined uniform style used in elegant women's albums at the beginning of the century. The intense apricot or peach colour of the background is also perceived as an apparently feminine attribute; in the predominantly male chauvinistic Russian culture this particular shade can hardly be associated with any man's object. In Voznesenskii's interpretation Severianin is unquestionably a women's poet, fascinating his audience with "intoxicating-exciting-sweet"[68] poetry. Voznesenskii's attitude to such a poetry and its creator is explicitly ironic, if not grotesque.

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[66] Krusanov, A. *Russkii avangard* (St. Petersburg: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 1996), 231; Livshits, Benedikt. *Polutoroglazyi strelets* (Leningrad: Izdatelstvo pisatelei, 1933), 196.

[67] Chukovskii, Kornei. *Ego-futuristy i kubo-futuristy* (Letchworth: Prideaux Press, 1976), 10-11.

Seeing himself as the poet-tribune if not a barometer of his time, Voznesenskii not infrequently produces civic verses on topical subjects. However, even in his most conformist works, the civic content never totally subordinates the form and technical devices. As a consequence, the poet's technical experiments acquire a certain self-sufficient significance, which makes the whole work appealing and interesting irrespective of its actual content. The subject of his videom entitled "Kak naiti SKV v Moskve?"[69] ("How to Find Hard Currency in Moscow?" fig. 57), created at the peak of inflation, seems to be taken straight from the Russian newspapers of the time, cursing, or, vice versa, praising (depending on their political orientation) the ability of successful businessmen or other lucky citizens (mostly the so-called New Russians) to make dollars or *zelenye* ("the greenbacks"), as contemporary vernacular calls them. It is worth noting that this videom is thematically related to Voznesenskii's poem "Zelenaia ballada"[70] ("The Green Ballad"), in which the sacramental phrase, "How to find Hard Currency in Moscow?" is obsessively repeated or implied at the end of each stanza. In the ballad the search for dollars is identified with "the new sex," which has engaged everybody, a school student, a public prosecutor, an artist, even Pilate, who asks Christ the same topical question. National cultural icons have not been spared either: a bronzed Pushkin as green as an American dollar is standing in line at Macdonald's, and the well-known Russian artist Savrasov, the author of the popular picture, "Rooks have flown in," is referred to as the creator of the painting "Hard Currency has flown in." "From the border with cannabis[71] to the North-West border our country is coming out green," sadly states the poet.

Voznesenskii's videom can be viewed as a visual answer to the main question asked in "Zelenaia ballada." *SKV* (an acronym for "Hard Currency") is an integral part of the name of the Russian capital MoSKVa, which is visually emphasized by the texture and size of the

[68] Chukovskii, 7-8.

[69] Voznesenskii, Andrei. *Videomy,* 123.

[70] Voznesenskii., 388-390.

[71] Here Voznesenskii refers to Central Asian countries, where hemp is traditionally grown and smoking cannabis is regarded as national tradition.

appropriate letters cut out from American dollars. Like other videoms, accompanied by conventional poems, the composition "Kak naiti SKV v Moskve" is mimetic. It does not create reality in itself, but whimsically reconstructs it in the elements of the language. The existing text of the "Zelenaia ballada" substantially reduces the creative potential of the reader, even to a greater extent than in the case of the composition "Boi petukhov" ("Cocks' fight"). In "Kak naiti v Moskve SKV?" all possible avenues and intersections of the reader's fantasy are already provided with road signs. And yet the poem captures the attention by its unexpected treatment of a word, setting the reader's teeth on the edge with its repetitive appearance in printed materials, street signs, advertisements, etc., not only in the capital itself but also throughout the whole country. The eye recognizes the name of the Russian capital immediately by briefly scanning the composition. Separation of a word as an independent unit, or the reduction of discourse to minimal semantic units, encourages readings, which result in unexpected outcomes. Visual poetry widely employs this technique thus making the reader deal with

> a few words at a time. Maybe just one. Our reading habits tend to construct content even out of fragmentary texts. Therefore the concrete poet reduces his material to a point where the inattentive reader is forced to pay attention to the word as word, as a meaning and a "body."[72]

The same technique employed by Voznesenskii in one of his early visual poems,[73] first produced as autholithography[74] (Fig. 58), reveals the metathetical nature of two anagramic Russian words, *tma* ("darkness") and *mat* ("mother"), symbolically suggesting that creativity, the mother, emerges from the darkness of stagnation.[75] In Voznesenskii's arsenal of creative devices and methods, however, reduction is not the most productive one, since in visual poetry the primary interest of this experiment-oriented contemporary poet lies principally in the sphere of volumetric visual composition which often utilizes a mixture of techniques. This, to a great extent, has been conditioned by the nature of his talent and by his training as an architect, a professional with a highly developed sense of spaciality and proportion. It is not surprising that Voznesenskii does not limit his creativity to more traditional forms of visual poetry which operate within two-dimensional spaces. Conversely, his poetic ambition to explore the "videotizm"[76] of today's reality makes it clear that Voznesenskii prefers to work with all three dimensions. He, therefore, embraces in his creativity the multiplicity of 'situational' materials in order to enhance, by their texture, spaciality, volume, the surrounding space, the essence of his linguistic experiments, and multivariant juxtapositions of all integral elements of the work.

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[72] Waldrop, Rosmarie. "A Basis of Concrete Poetry," Kostelanetz, Richard, ed. *The Avant-Garde Tradition in Literature* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1982), 316.

[73] Voznesenskii, Andrei. "Tma-mat," *Metropol: Literaturnyi almanakh* (Moscow: Ardis, 1979), 378.

[74] Voznesenskii, Andrei. *Videomy*, 338, 349.

[75] Voznesenskii, Andrei. *Aksioma samoiska*, 313.

Although Voznesenskii began his visual experimentation as early as the late 1960s, he was not the first Russian poet of post-war times who attempted to visualize poetic discourse. It is difficult, if possible at all, to reconstruct a precise chronological history of the contemporary visual poetry in Russia or to indicate more or less accurately the priority of individual authors. As Mikhail Sukhotin states, the first experiments in pattern poetry by Ian Satunovskii, Igor Kholin, Genrikh Sapgir and himself date to the late 1950s. Igor Kholin's visual text of that time has appeared in one of the 1995 issues of *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* (Fig. 59). In the 1960s Ry Nikonova, Sergei Sigei, Valerii Diachenko, Feliks Volosenkov, Evgenii Arbenev and Viktor Kikin founded the core of the "Uktuss school,"[77] which made valuable contributions to many trends of avant-garde art, including visual poetry. Works by Boris Konstriktor, Vladimir Erl (Vladimir Gorbunov), Boris Kudriakov, Gennadii Aigi, Leonid Aronzon, Dmitrii Avaliani and others appeared later. Not all pieces of visual or experimental poetry were published. Elizabeth Netzkowa (Mnatsakanova), one of the most talented contemporary visual poets, who left Moscow for Vienna in 1975, never attempted to publish a single visual piece in the Soviet Union, although she began to create hand-made books in the late 1940s. For other visual practitioners, even for those who, unlike Netzkowa, sought public recognition, publication presented a serious problem for decades due to censorship reasons.

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[76] This neologism of Voznesenskii is used in the annotation on the verso title of the poets' book *Videomy*.

[77] Nikonova-Tarshis, Anna Ry. "'Ukrusskaia shkola'" *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 16 (1995), 223-225.

Among the most fertile and original participants of the contemporary Russian avant-garde movement, Ry Nikonova (a pen-name of Anna Tarshis) and Sergei Sigei (Sergei Sigov) should be mentioned in the first place as wide-ranging experimental poets and performers, whose creative activities cover a broad spectrum of art and literature. At the beginning of their creative careers Nikonova and Sigei carried out a complete investigation of the visual aspect of Russian avant-garde literature, correlated their own experimentation with the achievements of predecessors before moving on to further work.

> By the present time there are hundreds of visual studies, with the "remnants" of the text and up to the total rejection of the text, with the substitution of one sign system by another. In Nikonova's output there are "shadowy" imprints on the paper, on the place where verses are supposed to be; there are indicators of letters which replace books, and words transformed in pictograms. Among Sigei's works there are palimpsests, collages, virtuoso applications, signs of verbal systems. The list of techniques, employed by Nikonova and Sigei, can be extended. It is important to state that they make invisible the visual borderline between the word and the visual representation, between the *verbal* and the *visual* text.[78]

Ry Nikonova has been involved in creative writing since 1959 and in painting since 1962. She was the founder of the Uktuss school in Sverdlovsk and edited (with Sergei Sigei) two most interesting *samizdat* journals with an avant-garde profile, both with strong visual aspects, *Nomer* (Number) and *Transponans.* She is also a founding member of Transfurist (Transfuturist) group of poets and artists, which is oriented toward radical experimentation in the Futurist manner. As Gerald Janecek mentions, Nikonova is the most energetic and inventive mind of the group, although, her own creativity goes far beyond the most radical innovations attempted by the Futurists.[79] The creative output of Nikonova in truly amazing in terms of both quality and quantity, but unfortunately, many of her works exist in only one copy. Probably for this reason her creativity has not received the scholarly attention it is due, although it has gained a national and international reputation. The Eisk-based poet[80] has produced concrete, sound and conceptual poems, works in transrational languages (*zaum*) as well as hand-made books and other projects, in which various literary, visual and often musical or sonoric devices are employed. She is also known for her theoretical works in avant-garde aesthetics and rhetoric. The framework of the present study does not allow a detailed survey of Nikonova's most interesting creative output and many of her theoretical doctrines. Nonetheless, an examination of several visual texts can reveal Nikonova's creative methods and principles.

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[78] Biriukov, Sergei. *Zevgma: russkaia poeziia ot manerizma do postmodernizma,* 149.

[79] *Dictionary of Russian Women Writers.* (Westpoint, London: Greenwood Press, 1994), 467.

"Vokrug solntsa B" ("Around the sun B," fig. 60) is introduced by the author as the poem which emphasized the segmentation of spaciality.[81] The spacial platform of the page is divided by sun rays, although not all of them are visible. The rayonist principle of material organization probably echoes Larionov's rayonist concept of the visible radiance of light as material and measurable substratum. The layout of the composition suggests two ways of reading, which are graphically marked by arrows or vectors. Nonetheless, even without this "graphical directions" the message can be read either in a conventional sequence from left to right or from top to bottom. In any case the reading does not present problem inasmuch as the textual component of the work is minimal and is limited to paired consonants, the grapheme "b" being the most frequent element. In fact, these graphic substances function as both linguistic and non-linguistic signs. In the first capacity they are employed to signify particular sounds associated with the given letters. They are also used to symbolize the binomial quantum which suggests an affinity with the binary code of the early version of the computer intellect, thus being at least partially a pictorial device. In this second capacity letter-components can be easily substituted by other graphic means to of convey the same idea more or less accurately.

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[80] When the present chapter was completed the author received a brief letter from Sigei and Nikonova informing that the couple have moved to Germany and transported there their works and archives. However, as Sigei rightfully suggests, both of them have gained their reputation as Russian visual poets, whose impressive output was created in homeland. For this reason works by Nikonova and Sigei are discussed in the section devoted to visual poetry in Russia.

[81] Nikonova-Tarshis, Ry. "SKS: Svobodno-konvertiruemye stikhi," *Gumanitarnyi fond* 42 (1992): 1.

The visual poem "Ne tam – ne tut"[82] ("Neither there, nor here," fig. 61) utilizes the principle of correction or rehabilitation of previously crossed out letters. This poem also implies inner dynamics inasmuch as the reader's eye, directed by the vector and the semantics of the work, is supposed to travel from left (*ne tam*) to right *(ne tut)* and in the opposite direction. Implied dynamism is one of important principles of Nikonova's creativity, since many of her visual works are immanently mobile and predisposed to further manipulations. As a rule, the suggested direction of motion is indicated by vectors or arrows, but not necessarily. The poem "Ost-zuiid"[83] ("East-West," fig. 62) presupposes zigzag reading of the text, however, no linguistic indicators are incorporated in the body of the work. It is up to the reader to find the appropriate ingress to the text.

Another work by Nikonova "Slova"[84] ("Words," fig. 63), is also discursively minimal but employs quite a different approach to the textual material. Individual letters, arranged on a pedestal and forming the isosceles triangle, are meant for reading in a zigzag manner. Determinant sequences of reading are indicated by vectors. Two of them, pointing to the top, as linguistic indicators lead the readers back to the beginning of the discourse, thus suggesting its infinity and the hypothetical possibility of re-reading. Nonetheless, the same vectors which function as graphical elements appear also to be vehicles of structural completion, as they almost touch the horizontal vector in the middle of the stylized pedestal. The hierarchy of letters established on the visual level suggests an equilibrium, which is nevertheless perceived to be a fragile one, with the implied inner motion or action, enhanced in this particular case by the "competition between the vacuum and the text."[85] As Nikonova argues in her brief commentary on the poem, in "Slova" the manner of reading reflects the process of overcoming the vacuum within the framework of the word as such.[86]

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[82] Nikonova-Tarshis, 1.

[83] Nikonova-Tarshis, 1.

[84] Nikonova-Tarshis, 1.

[85] Nikonova, Ry. "Slovo – lishnee kak takovoe," *Chernovik 6* (1992): 15.

[86] Nikonova-Tarshis, Ry. "SKS: Svobodno-konvertiruemye stikhi," *Gumanitarnyi fond* 42 (1992): 1.

Since "vacuum poetry" is not a commonly used concept, and since this concept is crucial for understanding Nikonova's and other visual poets' experimentation with spaciality and textuality, some clarification is in order. By literary vacuum Nikonova understands pauses or discourse-free space. According to the poet, the dependency of pauses upon texts in conventional literary output has been radically altered in literary production which separates the phonetic and the visual aspects of a work.[87] In this type of literature the integrity of the verbal or textual component is not mandatory. Conversely, the literary text can be an abundant element which distracts attention from the perception of significant extra-linguistic constituents of the work, such as its tactile characteristics, sonoric meaning (rustling, clinking), its odour, configuration or form, etc. For Nikonova, words are not indispensable for reflecting reality, and thus can be easily omitted. It should be kept in mind, that both Nikonova and Sigei do not consider a flat sheet of paper as an ideal material for their visual platforms; instead, they prefer to experiment with different substances and textures. Radical as it may be seen, Nikonova's concept of deverbalized poetry is not new in the history of Russian avant-garde literature. As has been mentioned in Chapter 1, in his programmatic work *Kan-Fun* Aleksei Chicherin expresses the same mistrust of verbal means as adequate poetic material as early as 1926. According to the Russian Constructivist, poets have been longing for a long time to "express themselves without words."[88] As for a word substitute, Chicherin suggests pictograms in combination with other symbols and means of visualization. In general, his experimentation with pictorial details and accessories for the expression of ideas and objects can be traced back to primitive times. Chicherin does not apply the term "vacuum poetry" to his production (as a practitioner he produced several verbless poems resembling geometrical abstractions) and, in fact, has not developed his concept to its logical conclusions, but his ideas have obviously been used by Nikonova for a theoretical background of her vacuum theory. Moreover, Chicherin's ideas are realized in works by many contemporary visual poets, who never refer to their productions as vacuum poetry, and may not be familiar with Nikonova's theorising.

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[87] See. Nikonova, Ry. "Slovo — lishnee kak takovoe," *Chernovik 6* (1992): 12-15; "Vektor vakuuma," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 3 (1993): 242-256.

[88] Chicherin, Aleksei. *Kan-Fun* (Moscow: Tsekh poetov, 1926), 8.

And yet visual practitioners do experiment with various forms of non-textual poetic discourse.

Problems related to the semantic aspect of this type of visual poetry will be discussed in Chapter 4. However, a brief analysis of several most noticeable works is required for a better understanding of the phenomenon of Russian nondiscursive visual poetry. Anna Alchuk's composition "Prosteishie"[89] ("The Simplest," fig. 64) is reminiscent of abstract art, although the minimal structural units employed by the author are graphemes and punctuation marks, geometrically organized in the rectangular shapes. Unlike Alchuk's composition, Genrikh Sapgir's poems from the cycle "Stikhi iz trekh elementov" ("Three Element Verses") at a non-verbal level transmit both communicative and emotive meanings codified by individual punctuation marks and their combinations. If the visual poem "Vopros"[90] ("The Question," fig. 65) can be regarded as literal visualization of the notion itself, its conjoined poem entitled "Otvet"[91] ("The Answer," fig. 66) parodies the form and the content of the hypothetical answer. The composition "Podtekst"[92] ("Subtext," fig. 67) obviously alludes to the widespread Soviet practice of communicating the message in a Aesopian or concealed manner for the those who could read between lines. "Marsh"[93] ("March," fig. 68) which visually communicates sonoric qualities of music designed to promote orderly marching, such as monophony, simplicity of tune, stability of general rhythm, and loudness. The composition surmounted with a question mark at the final line also suggests ironic connotation. Sergei Sigei's "Comma poem" (Fig. 69) is organized on an analogy with poetic discourse and comprises seven lines which are not uniform in the number of metric feet as far a visualized rhythmical pattern is concerned. The print is set flush on both sides, which gives a dramatic treatment to the poem's design and provides a pleasant contrast to the orthodox poetic discourse justified on the left side. Each line, however, begins with a sign identical in its shape and colour, probably suggesting the consistent usage of anaphora throughout the poem. Further analysis

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[89] *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 16 (1995): 242.

[90] *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 16 (1995): 240.

[91] *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 16 (1995): 240.

[92] *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 16 (1995): 240.

[93] *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 16 (1995): 241.

permits us to notice the epiphoric endings of the first four lines. The principal structural unit of the poem is a stylized comma depicted in three colours, pink, green and ultramarine, and partial overlapping of imprints also creates supplementary shades and tinges. The implication of the comma as a minimal unit provokes an inner conflict within the discourse. On the one hand, this sign can be regarded as visual symbol of a metrical segment, a foot, in a phonological hierarchy. On the other hand, however, a comma indicates a pause, interval, or vacuum. Thus, the poem can be interpreted as a poetic work with some immanently implied meaning resistant to reading and decoding, as well as a vacuum poem. Being utterly unpronounceable, Sigei's poem exists only in its visual representation, and therefore its dimensions, colour scheme, spacial dynamics, and other visual elements acquire meaning, thus clearly illustrating the formula to which may be reduced all definitions of visual poetry: "form = content, content = form."[94] In this sense Sigei's vacuum composition does produce meaning, however hypothetical and arbitrary it can be. Without clear referents the composition suggests a multiplicity of potential readings. Thus, the initial arrangement of structural units, their on-going regrouping, and final supplanting of blue units by the unbroken succession of pink and green ones can be dramatically interpreted even by the traditional left to right linear approach to the discourse, to say nothing about other ways of ingress, which are implicitly present in the structure itself, like diagonal or zigzag.

As it is clear that the question of semantics acquires a special status in nondiscursive compositions. A closer look at Dmitrii Bulatov's composition (one in a series), which is seemingly deprived of any meaningful verbal discourse, and yet utilizes individual letters as basic structural units, may highlight the creative principles behind works of this type (Fig. 70), and, probably, behind vacuum poetry in general. In the work of the Kaliningrad-based author the repetitive vertical sequence of the Latin grapheme "R" is formed by visual signs which can't be identified as linguistic signs, inasmuch as they do not produce a text, the latter understood as a piece of written or spoken language (which may consist of just one word[95]). Compositions with the missing textual component in accordance with Nikonova's definition belong to the corpus of vacuum works, to which the conventional methods of semantic analysis can't be applied. Therefore, the chain of visual signs may be identified with the vocal clues, the notion self-sufficient enough in terms of meaning. Gradual truncation of the letters "R" towards its total physical disappearance can be interpreted as the imperceptible lowering of the voice and sinking into silence or total verbal vacuum; the latter is symbolized by empty bar lines. These levels of hypothetical meaning, however, are not supported by the textual component, which typically provides more accurate comprehension of the message. If the textual component is missing, as occurs in Bulatov's composition, does it inevitably indicate the absence of semantic value? Is it tantamount to saying that in works without a lexical component the meaning is indiscernible? Shall we treat lettristic compositions as purely ornamental structures which are completely deprived of textual meaning? Since many theoretical aspects of vacuum or non-textual visual poetry have not been developed (or even addressed yet) there is no clear answer to many of these questions. However, some suppositions may be helpful for understanding the mechanism of meaning acquisition applicable to non-textual visual poetry. It is true that Bulatov's work does not contain a textual element. However, it is possible to view the grapheme "*R*" as both a visual sign and as an abbreviation, characterised by Derrida as writing which reduces the dimensions of its presence to a sign.[96] In this light it is not difficult to realize that the abbreviation R may stand for a variety of meaningful notions, each having a textual meaning. However, due to the fact that the textual semantics of the work is not clearly determined by the existing abbreviation, multiple readings linking this abbreviation, for example, to the theory of music (due to the presence of another musical attribute, bar lines, in the work structure) can be suggested. One of them is the *responsorium*, antiphonal solo and unison singing in the Gregorian chant. In this case it would be possible to suggest the dual pattern of reading and interpreting the vertical sequence of the letters "R" ( indicating both the vocal clues and the notion of *responsorium* itself): the ascending one, from the top to bottom, as well as the descending one in the opposite direction. However, any suggested reading of the composition, as with other pieces of vacuum text will be and should be highly arbitrary.

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[94] Solt, Mary Ellen. *Concrete Poetry: A World View* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1971), 13.

[95] Richards, Jack S.; Platt, John; Platt, Heidi. *Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 378.

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[96] Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayati Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1976) 28.

The principles of text reduction and elimination are realized most radically in Nikonova's own vacuum poems (Fig. 71). Works of this type comprise vectors of reading and structural frames with words missing, and thus provide exterior schemes used to organize literary material without any content. In the poet's opinion, the absence of the verbal text in her vacuum works does not influence significantly their essence. As she argues, her compositions can be compared to apartments without tenants, whose presence or absence cannot influence the attraction of places themselves.[97] Optically-composed works cannot be read; they are meant, however, to be decoded and interpreted conceptually. The codes which regulate the interaction of the reader with the text can be less lucid than in the case of reading, based on established conventions of verbal text perception. Nonetheless, the reader's activity is controlled (or at least should be controlled) by the discourse for the interaction to be successful. For this reason Nikonova incorporates her vectors, structural frames and pictograms, whereas Chicherin reckons upon on pictograms and non-linguistic indicators and symbols. Unlike works of fine art, verbless pieces of visual poetry appeal more to our intellectual capacities than to our purely aesthetic perception, which may be the case with fine art. Nonetheless, in many cases the borderline between verbless visual pieces and abstract graphics or painting is transparent indeed.

Besides linguistically minimal and vacuum poems, Nikonova creates extensive series of verbal and graphical variations, based on paired phrases. Entitled as "Pliugmy", these lengthy and complex compositions employ fragmentation, isolation, extension, negation, fusion, reverse spelling, non-linear or vertical word arrangement, framing and other emphatic devices of manipulation with the basic textual material. Consistent application of variation techniques to the primary phrases resembles musical variation, in which a theme is followed by a varying number of modified restatements. In music, the theme is usually a simple tune in binary form, and this principles is reflected in Nikonova's choice of material for further manipulations. Her basic phrases are predominantly popular sayings or mottos (like "Proletarians of all countries, be united" + "What if it happens?"), well-known aphorisms and even theorems ("Kill me, but don't touch my drawings" + "The square of the lengths of the hypotenuse equals the sum of the squares of the other two sides"), banal maxims, etc. The fixed elements or features that a variation on a theme has in common with the theme, are always of a verbal nature; though, they may be punned, extended, partially crossed out, even blackened out or misspelled. The variable elements are of a graphic, discursive and pictorial nature, or a combination of ways in which the theme is varied. As a rule, each variation is numbered, and the number of variations on a theme usually exceeds several tens. (Fig. 72).

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[97] Nikonova-Tarshis, Ry. "SKS: Svobodno-konvertiruemye stikhi," *Gumanitarnyi fond* 42 (1992): 1.

A separate group of Nikonova's complex structures of "architectural treatments" are based on various discursive materials, like fairy tales, letters, or invented literary images with the detailed treatment of a verbally expressed leitmotif. As far as semantics is concerned, "Liubovnik pogremushki" ("Lover of a Baby-rattle," fig. 73), can be divided into three vertical columns. The narrow left column is filled with a monotonous succession of onomatopoeic words signifying rattling, corresponding to the baby-rattle part. Two right-sided columns, separated by wide black lines, comprise the variety of possible responses to the ceaseless and irritating sound of rattling, ranging from polite requests to beggings and orders like "Shut up!" Respectively, the central part of the platform is the common area. The poem can be interpreted as a dramatic piece for two actors which meets several dramatic conventions and has a dramatic structure. Two sound parts, namely, rattling which is followed by hiccups and sobbing, and verbal responses to it, varied in its emotive tonality and vocabulary, are to be accepted as impersonation and representation of the baby-rattle and the character who is referred to as her lover. Thus the platform of the page is regarded as the actual scene of action, whether the apartment, room, or premises of a limited space, in which the noise seems especially annoying. The beginning of the unconventional "dialogue": *Dzin – zatknis, umoliaiu* ("Ring" – "Shut up, I beg you") creates the tone and sets the conflict between the two characters, as a dramatic introduction. Then the trend of action logically leads to the climax, the lover's attempt to leave in a furious state, and the dénouement of final reconciliation, in which the baby rattle murmurs *milenkii* ("darling") instead of her usual rattling, whereas her lover expresses his readiness to give up with the noise. The visual aspect of the works is not deprived of a certain tension, if not dramatic effect either, achieved by the juxtaposition of black, white and hatched areas. The correlation between remarks is indicated by vectors, although the development of the action allows the arbitrary placement of the lover's remarks at the final scenes of climax and its solution.

The "architectural treatment" of the work "Shchuki Elzy" ("Elza's pikes," fig. 74) created in the same vein represents a visual interpretation of the fairy tale based on marine motifs, as some fragments of layout, resembling stylized waves, suggest. The discursive components of the work state the story through a connected set of verbally minimal narrative statements, mostly expressed by elliptical unextended constituents. The letter of Marvin Sackner, the owner of the Archive-Museum of Concrete Poetry in Miami Beach to Ry Nikonova[98] underwent the same "architectural treatment;" however this time the language of discourse is English (Fig. 75). Despite it verbal minimalism, the work gives a general idea of the letter's content, exemplified by such key words as "visual / verbal art," "great things," "the quality of the works," "the uniqueness," etc. It is easy to understand that in his letter Marvin Sackner expresses his high evaluation of Nikonova's visual pieces, probably purchased for his collection. It should be noted that both Nikonova and Sigei often resort to the Latin alphabet and often include foreign words in their compositions. One of Sigei's recent circles entitled "Plus latinizatsija Russkogo Jazyka" ("Plus Latinization of Russian") is written in Latin letters exclusively, and incorporated Russian words are given in their Latin transliteration (Fig. 76). The attempted latinization as well as macaronism of visual pieces by Nikonova and Sigei is probably stimulated by numerous common projects fulfilled by Russian practitioners in cooperation with their Western colleagues. Nonetheless, there are several common projects, in which exclusively Cyrillic letters are used, as in Ilze Garnier's, the French avant-garde poet, and Nikonova's cycle "A-E-I"[99] (Fig. 77).

Although Sergei Sigei is considered to be one of the most important contemporary Russian visual poets, his creative output, like that of Nikonova, has also received little critical attention. Sigei began to write experimental poetry in 1962, and since that time has produced numerous experimental works and hand-made books, as well as participated in many national and international projects and exhibitions. In general Sigei tends toward a mixed technique, and performance or manipulation of visual texts is an integral part of his creative output. As he states, "visual poetry originates when poets begin to think about the technique of poem production. In other words, poets turn into artists, but still produce poems."[100] There is no doubt that Sigei's varied creative activity deserves a separate thorough study. My intention, however, is to outline the most interesting directions his experimentation has taken.

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[98] Nikonova, Ry. "Returned letters," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 16 (1995): 317.

[99] Nikonova, 320.

Among contemporary Russian visual practitioners, Sigei was the first to turn to pictographic poems, the form which was later explored by other practitioners, Genrikh Sapgir in particular. Pictographic writing is typically based on the premise that there is "no connection or at least only a loosely recognized implied one, between the spoken word, the name used in the native vernacular to designate the object, and the picture representing the thing referred to."[101] Consequently the picture "recalls the thing itself to the mind, not the name of the thing, unless involuntarily called up by the reader."[102] The evolution of pictographic writing "among people of all races [...] seems to have progressed along practically identical lines of growth,"[103] although principles of pictography were not uniform for different systems of "semasiographic writing."[104] As Senner suggests, "each system evolved unique characteristics within distinct graphic and semantic features."[105] Therefore, the process of message decoding required a series of mental experiences assisted by codes and conventions, specific for the particular system, inasmuch as codes differed in appearance and connotations from culture to culture. The ability to produce or understand pictographs did not require any previous training, but codes and conventions associated with pictographic records, were to be retained by the common memory of the tribe or ethnic group members. Without *a priori* knowledge of the code or the particular circumstances under which the pictograph was created, the message can be resistant to decoding. But it should also be kept in mind, that due to the fact that written messages did not correspond to exact forms of speech, certain messages could be interpreted in many ways even by members of the same community.[106] The works of contemporary visual practitioners, in which pictograms are employed in most cases present the same difficulty of interpreting, since the author's intent is not always clear and the relationship between the pictorial means and speech is very loose. Not surprisingly, a poetic creation of Willy Melnikov, Russian multilingual poet, who attempts to express his poetic thoughts in pictographic languages of the Aztec and May Indians (Fig. 78), has not attracted any attention of Russian scholars unfamiliar with Indian pictographic writing. It is also worth mentioning that abstract notions and ideas cannot be expressed by semasiographic signs, which apparently limits the communicative and expressive potential of pictographic writing and further complicates the interpretive process.[107]

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[100] Sigei, Sergei. "Kratkaia istoriia vizualnoi poezii v Rossii," 14.

[101] Mason, William A. *A History of the Art of Writing* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928), 51.

[102] Mason, 51.

[103] Mason, 49.

[104] In contrast to the phonographic writing (expressing speech) semasiographic writing is defined as "expressing meanings and notions loosely connected with speech." Gelb, I.J. *A Study of Writing* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), 11.

[105] Senner, Wayne M. "Theories and Myth on the Origins of Writing: A Historical Overview." *Senner, Wayne M., ed. The Origins of Writing* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 6.

In this light Sigei's "picto-poem" based on Velimir Khlebnikov's verse "Krylyshkuia zolotopismom"[108] (the title may be rendered as "Winging by Writing in Gold," fig. 79) presents a special interest. Sigei's work is obviously difficult for interpretation by readers unfamiliar with its literary background. The meaning of the basic poetic work, however, is not entirely lucid either. Khlebnikov's work has several transrational (*zaum*) words and neologisms, such as *zinziver, and o lebedivo.* The latter is a the non-existing word, derived from the noun *lebed* meaning "swan." It also contains onomatopoeic neologisms like *pin* and *tararakhnut.* If the final noun *vera* in the semantically vague third line means "faith," then the whole line presents a suprasyntactic shift, occurring "when the words in a text are all standard words in a syntactic structure that is grammatically correct, yet the meanings of the words still do not produce a logical, clear idea."[109] The text reads as follows:

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[106] Gelb, I.J. *A Study of Writing,* 11-12.

[107] According to Senner, pictographs which gradually assume additional abstract notions, become ideograms of ideas. See: Senner, Wayne M. "Theories and Myth on the Origins of Writing: A Historical Overview," 5.

[108] Sigei, Sergei. "Ekhona: Pikto i drugie stikhi dlia glazomozga i glaza: 1969-1982," *Chernovik* 4 (1990): 95.

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|---|---|
| Krylyshkuia zolotopismom | Winging by Writing in Gold |
| Toncaishikh zhil | Of the thinnest veins |
| Kuznechik v kuzov puza ulozhil | The grasshopper put inside his belly |
| Pribrezhnykh mnogo trav i ver | A lot of riverside herbs and faiths |
| Pin, pin, pin! tararakhnul zinziver | Pin, pin, pin! the zinziver rumbled |
| O lebedivo! | Oh swanlike miracle! |
| O ozari! | Oh illuminate! |

The structure of Sigei's work reflects that of Khlebnikov's discourse: each poetic line relates to the individual row of figures, and pictures follow each other in an order corresponding to the continuity of the poetic images. The first two poetic lines, however, are graphically united in the initial sequence of pictographs, which is justified by grammar and semantics of the phrase *Krylyshkuia zolotopismom / Tonchaishikh zhil.* It would be interesting to compare the manner of imitating real objects with the representation of notions standing for the author's' *zaum* neologisms. Although highly stylized, the figures of wings, grasshopper and swan are still recognizable and relatively unambiguous. Provided that the reader is familiar with the poetic text, verbs with the attached modifiers ("put inside his belly," "a lot of") can be associated with vectors of direction and other scientific symbols. The pictograms corresponding to *zaum* neologisms are probably meant to convey the same specific information, and in this capacity obviously present difficulties for their decoding. The major practical problem which arises here is the degree of generalization and abstraction, which makes the pictograph resistant to identification and thus meaningless. Inasmuch as Sigei deals with transrational language, figures in the fourth and sixth lines can hardly have any familiar appearance, since they express the author's individual reflection of the *zaum* words. It is likely that other recipients of the same verbal information will create different associations in their mind's eye, and the consensus on this matter is largely unattainable. In general, the issue of recognising and ascribing levels of meaning to pictograms is not simple, inasmuch as pictures or a grouping of pictures (whether ancient or produced by contemporary visual poets) can be more complex than appears at first glance. Moreover, in contemporary visual poetry pictograms are not infrequently combined with mathematical symbols, musical notation, individual letters or even words and word combinations, each element functioning as primary or supplementary semantic determinative. Sergei Sigei's pictographic poetry exemplifies different types of this componential writing (Fig. 80-81). Other Russian visual poets also tend to fuse pictographs with discursive elements. Genrikh Sapgir's cycle of "word-drawings"[110] substitutes individual words with appropriate pictograms in the poetic discourse. The cycle comprises three pieces, each exploring the motif of love in a mounting progression of emotional and spiritual intensity. Interestingly, the applied pictography has its specific denotation and symbolic meaning in every piece. In the first one, entitled "Liubov zrelaia" ("A Ripe Love," fig. 82), pictograms metaphorically elucidate the idea of ripeness or maturity (both notions are rendered by the same noun in Russian). In this poem all are species of the plant kingdom with three pictograms of fruits among them. The second piece "Liubov glubokaia" ("A Deep Love," fig. 83), employs the same juxtaposition of the figurative and literal meaning of the attribute modifying the noun "love." Three pictograms incorporated in the poetic discourse represent three deep-water inhabitants (although belonging to different phyla of the animal kingdom) and a stylized under-water current. In addition to the enunciated tenor, evoked by all pictograms, each of them implies an individual metaphor, which becomes explicit after conversion of the picture into the verbal medium: *nyriaiu v tebia ryboi* ("I dive into you like a fish"), *tvoia tainstvennaia rakushka* ("your mysterious shell"), etc. The very last piece "Liubov-polet" ("Love is a Flight," fig. 84) highlights the idea of flying by pictograms of wings, clouds, birds and a spiral or spring-shaped curved line, which probably stands for the heights.

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[109] Janecek, Gerald. "A ZAUM's Classification," *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 20: 1-2 (1986), 43.

The coded structure of pictographic poems and pattern poems with incorporated pictograms resemble that of rebuses, but in most cases they are not pictorial conundrums, which lose their visible character when resolved. This does not mean that all puzzle poems with pictures should be excluded from the body of visual poetry. As Dick Higgins suggests, some

[110] Sapgir, Genrikh. "Slovorisunok," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 16 (1995): 258-260.

rebuses can be viewed as analogous forms of pattern poetry; primarily those, which invite the reader to play a game and to solve the problem of meaning by "taking only the evidence given in the poem and working through it so as to give pleasure."[111] As a rule pictographic poems do not meet this requirement. Nor do they combine pictograms in order to create syllables or words associated with particular pictures. And yet, contemporary visual poetry in Russian contains a group of poems which can be characterised as puzzle poems, which, however, is not the focus of the present study.

The principle of "transposing" (or transferring) already printed products to another tonality[112] was formulated in the late 1960s and later realized in many works by Nikonova and Sigei (the majority of which were published in the journal *Transponans*). One of the particularly remarkable experiments along this line is Sigei's technique of blacking out individual letters, syllables, words, typographical signs and elements of illustrations in the books by other authors with the idea of producing an entirely new product in terms of both discourse and layout. Sigei's *Vor okov* (*A Thief of Fetters*) is based on the illustrated book for children, the text and pictures of which have been changed almost beyond recognition by the above-mentioned technique (Fig. 85). As a result of painting over, the newly created discourse appears to be written in a transrational language which is divorced from any logically motivated narrative sequence. Despite the abundance of meaningless neologisms and uncommon capitalization and punctuation, basic grammar rules are still observed. But regular words and word combinations have distorted graphic appearances inasmuch as the grouping of graphemes into words, and grouping of words into phrases is not standard, many of the words are broken into fragments by black marks which have been inserted randomly. Among other means of physical signification, a horizontal and vertical framing of words and occasional typographical corrections made in black ink are most noticeable. The layout of the page is also far from the original make-up. Besides changing the semantics of the discourse, black spaces of various configuration, design and length, painted over printed letters and words have modified the visual pattern and the rhythm of the original text. The rhythm of new discourse does not have fixed intervals of space, and thus can be characterized as multimetric and frequently syncopated. The unorthodox graphic appearance of words challenges the recognition of stressed syllables and emphatically accented words. In addition, many of the black marks are shaped like easily recognized objects and animal species, and this pictographic quality of the discourse expands the gap between the the basic text and Sigei's work. It would be natural to suggest that the conventional pattern of reading can also be altered as well by providing the reader with its own choice of ingress. The principle of "transposing" has been developed in other works by Sigei to be finalized in the palimpsest technique, when the basic text has been partially erased and a later discourse written over its.[113]

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[111] Higgins, Dick. *Pattern Poetry: Guide to an Unknown Literature*, 184.

[112] Nikonova-Tarshis, Anna Ry. "'Uktusskaia shkola," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 16 (1995)," 226.

Typographical experimentation does not play a very important role in the most recent works by Sigei as compared to the manipulation of material in visual poetry, or to the performative aspect, which the poet regarded as an inseparable aspect of a work's visuality. However, the poet's quest for the innovative does not disregard this important means of visualization in many of his works. Manipulation of the colour scheme of a letter drawing, outlining eroded letter contours, insertion of smaller letters within bigger ones, resorting to overlapped or partially imprinted letterforms and other means of typographic expressivity are fused in his works with mixed-media techniques to bring the iconicity of his language to the point where non-verbal means begin to function as primary devices of communication. Even those compositions and collages by Sigei, which are undoubtedly word-oriented, have a very strong iconic quality. As the Swiss visual poet Mattias Kün points out, letterforms in works of both Sigei and Nikonova have explicit pictorial distinctions[114]. Several examples may give a general idea of the technique applied by the poet (Fig. 86). It would be difficult, however, to generalize or summarize Sigei's diverse and richly exploitable typographic techniques inasmuch as the range of Sigei's experimentation in this area has an extremely broad spectrum. Sigei is responsible for numerous innovations in the typography of contemporary Russian visual poetry, many of which have been successfully used by the poets who follow him.

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[113] For more detailed description see: Sigei, Sergei. "Perepletnaia rabota," *Chernovik* 8 (1993): 73-74.

[114] Kün, Mattias. Letter to R. Nikonova and S. Sigei of October 14, 1988. *Literatura posle zhivopisi: Uchenye zapiski otdela zhivopisi i grafiki Eiskogo istoriko-kraevedcheskogo muzeia* (Eisk: n. p., 1991), 15.

Andrei Repeshko's experimentation with typography lies primarily in the domain of letter shapes. His shaped writing, as well as outlined compositions, including those with the elements of "bent lines,"[115] utilizes highly stylized letters which resemble pictograms, although, his works are by no means pieces of pictographic writing. Repeshko's letters are difficult to recognize as conventional symbols of writing inasmuch as they are perceived as pictorial devices. Nonetheless, they function as characters of the Russian alphabet to form a meaningful text, whether the reader views the text as comprehensible or not. In addition to his use of non-standard typography Repeshko's refusal to employ spaces between words, capitalization, punctuation and other formal word separators, creates additional problems for the reader. In the preface to his solid-shaped visual poem, which begins "Shakhmatnyi stroi strogn"[116] ("The System of Chess Is Orderly," fig. 87) the author mentions that the work was created on February 25, 1992 in the city of Krasnodar, when he was under the impression of a certain chess problem, which remained unsolved, but nonetheless left a deep mark on the author's impressionable mind. In order to read the whole linguistically dense and solid text of the poem the reader probably has to equip himself with a magnifying glass and be ready to invest a lot of time into this labour-consuming process. Some other works by Repeshko are created in the same vein, although the visual dimension of his compositions vary. "Strannye stranstviia"[117] ("Odd Journeys," fig. 88) combines solid form with bent lines, while the untitled outlined composition shaped like a fish[118] (Fig. 89) also utilizes purely pictorial signs.

Experiments by the Kaliningrad-based graphic artist Olga Dmitrieva, which have been conceptualized in the project entitled "Literaturnaia ucheba" ("Literary Training"), are of special interest regarding both typographic effects and work semantics. The project can be viewed as the modern variant of alphabetic composition, the subform of which has recently attracted the attention of several Russian visual poets.[119] In the canonic form every successive line or stanza begins with a successive letter of the alphabet. Dmitrieva's work comprises 33 pages, each successive page exemplifying one character of the Russian alphabet, and a title page, which will be discussed later. Purely formal experimentation with the subgenre, however, is not the primary concern of the author, whose major intention is to epitomize the mechanism of the narrativization of reality by means of newspapers, and headlines in particular as the compressed forms of information flow. Inasmuch as headlines attract the reader's attention and help him to index the content, summarize the story and depict its mood, assist in setting the tone of the newspaper and provide adequate typographic relief,[120] their influence on the reader is significant. It is well known that the reader's decision whether to read or to bypass the material often depends on the prompt suggested by headline. Moreover, newspaper headlines tend "to depict the mood of the times,"[121] and this specific tendency receives its thorough treatment in Dmitrieva's project. Dmitrieva is not the first Russian author to play visual games with newspaper titles and headlines. In his undated visual poem Vagrich Bakhchanian whimsically experiments with the title of the mouthpiece of the USSR Communist party "*Pravda*" (which means "truth") and its typical letter faces by repeating the final syllable of the word in addition to breaking the later into the two semantical units. This morphological manipulation results in obtaining the word combination *Prav Dada*[122] (Fig. 90) Later, Bakhchanian's work was deliberately imitated by Konstantin Kuzminsky, an émigré poet who now resides in the USA. Kuzminsky's composition[123] (Fig. 91) "Vesti iz *Izvestii*" is formally dedicated to Bakhchanian and utilizes the former's technique of deconstruction to achieve a mocking pleonastic effect. Inasmuch as *Izvestia* means "news" Kuzminsky's work "News from *Izvestiia*" apparently calls attention to an intentional redundancy of the phrase. In order to emphasize a logical fallacy of the title the author further decomposes its constituents and thus creates meaningless phrases derived from the kernel words. This manipulation is repeated 33 times, each absurd outcome being framed and all of them arranged on two pages against the characteristic background of newspaper print. The author's attitude to news in its interpretation by the Soviet press is explicit and thus does not require any comment.

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[115] Mayer, Peter "Framed and Shaped Writing." *Studio International* September (1968): 112.

[116] *Chernovik* 8 (1993): 81.

[117] *Chernovik* 8 (1993):, 83.

[118] *Chernovik* 8 (1993): 84.

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[119] The Muscovite Vladimir Supik has composed a palindromic alphabet poem "Bukvy v kub" ("Letters in the square!"). See: *Chernovik* 5 (1991): 142-43. Another Moscow-based poet Dmitrii Avaliani wrote a reverse acrostical alphabetic poem, in which the initial letters of words written in a column, introduce Russian alphabet in reverse order. This example is pointed out by Sergei Biriukov in his article ". . . I poisk suti nezhnoi. . . " in *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 16 (1996): 273-274.

[120] Baskette, Floyd K., Sissors, Jack Z., and Brooks, Brian S. *The Art of Editing* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co, Inc., 1982), 173.

[121] Baskette, 176.

[122] Kuzminsky, Konstantin K. and Kovalev, Gregory eds. *The Blue Lagoon Anthology of Modern Russian Poetry.* Vol. 3A. (1986), n. pag.

[123] Kuzminsky, Konstantin K., and Kivalev, Gregory, eds. *The Blue Lagoon Anthology of Modern Russian Poetry.* Vol. 2A. (1986), n. pag.

In its turn Dmitrieva's composition also reveals an unequivocal scepticism regarding objectivity and unbiased treatment of the events effected by mass media. However, as she suggests, her work throws light on the relationship between the mass media and herself as a state.[124] Being an original concept of the artist, the last statement needs some clarification. Olga Dmitrieva usually presents her works under the pen-name Respublika Olga or Ochen nezavisimaia respublika Olga ("The Republic of Olga" or "The Very Independent Republic of Olga"), thus referring to herself as to an independent sovereign political unit with all relevant attributes such as territory, population, form of power, history, economy, climate, etc. In 1992 Dmitrieva made a project "Gosudarstvo – eto ia" ("I am the state"), the title of which obviously alludes to the famous declaration by Louis XIV, *le roi soleil*, who established an absolutely monarchy in France. Therefore, Dmitrieva interprets her creative activities as an active cultural policy pursued by the state of "Respublika Olga." Dmitrieva's choice of material is by no means accidental, given the high status of the printed word in a country where it is traditionally regarded as an effective instrument of power. As the authors argues, "besides being instrumental in the description of reality, a word creates reality."[125] This very process of creating reality, as well as its final outcome, seems problematic for the author, due to apparent ideological implications and the imposition of meaning on past events. As she further suggests in her brief preface, "journalists obtrusively inflict their own views on the world which could never have been created by facts alone."[126] Dmitrieva's scepticism about the objectivity or adequacy of a verbally reconstructed reality coincides with increasing concern for the narrativization (and thus the subjectivization) of history, clearly expressed by many Western scholars in the last few decades.[127] This concern is associated with the larger philosophical issues of the power of discourse to model the reader's perception of reality. Dmitrieva does not attempt to theorize, nor does she refer to any scholarly work in the field. Instead, she visually parodies the mechanism of verbal reconstruction of reality by mass media, by selecting a particular and narrow aspect and developing it to absurd extremes. In her preface Dmitrieva highlights her intention to reconstruct the context of time by her manipulation of clipped newspaper headlines, which she further cuts into smaller sections and then rearranges alphabetically. As a result of such an approach,

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[124] Dmitrieva, Olga. Letter to the author of March 18, 1998.

[125] Dmitrieva, Olga. "Literaturnaia ucheba" Unpublished manuscript, n. pag.

> the meaning of phrases is lost; however, words which have been set free from the verbal context, visibly represent the context of their time. And at this point, looking at this outrageous mess, one realizes that the essence of the world is a visual image rather than a word. An eye, and not a tongue is its prophet. The word breaks inside, it has its memory, and the past has more dimensions than the symbolic image breaking outside. In this sense we can see only the profile of the world, as if it were a theatre backdrop, where the perspective is nothing else but the trick of the decorator. You can touch it, but cannot read it; you can portray it but cannot comprehend it; you can see it but cannot get to know it. The world which thus emerges from headlines is single-dimensional and flat. It is futile to search for mystery in its depth. The mystery is on the surface, having an exterior rather than interior character.

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[126] Dmitrieva, n. pag.

[127] The best-known works on the subject include: Foucault, Michael. *The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse of the Language.* Tr. A.M Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1972); Foucault, Michael *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews.* Tr. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977); White, Hayden. *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Universtity Press, 1973); Canary, Robert H., and Kozicki, Henry, eds. *The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978).

Although the word forms which comprise the quasi-headlines function as structural blocks to be grouped and arranged in various ways, they are predominantly perceived as linguistic signs rather than as a visual means of expression. It is the semantics more than the graphic aspect of newspaper headlines which are the primary target for ridicule and parody. In parodying newspaper style, Dmitrieva violates the established practice of packaging material, which is used by newspaper editors as a means of aiding the reader to consume the product faster and read more of what has been written. Newspaper editors

> may arrange the news so that the design resulting from an arrangement connotes something beyond the meaning of the words. Such connotations may range from a design telling the reader that a story is significant and serious to another design emphasizing a light-hearted, tongue-in-cheek approach. Connotations of the newspaper's whole design may give readers the feeling they are reading a conservative paper or one that is liberal or old-fashioned, or progressive. The editor therefore, is concerned with the orderly arrangement of the news as well as with creating appropriate connotations.[128]

Although the arrangement of verbal material in "Literaturnaia ucheba" in most cases does not facilitate readership, especially on the pages marked by the topsy-turvy, diagonal or haphazard positioning of the material, it is obviously the content which puzzles the readers most of all. The language of the discourse is very simple and mimics journalistic clichés, advertisements, inscriptions and other linguistic formulae typically used for newspaper headlines. But the messages are confusing, ambiguous or merely ludicrous. As far as semantics is concerned, the few quasi-headlines can hypothetically be borrowed from actual periodical editions. On *A*-letter page, for instance, such semantically neutral headlines as *Avtokatastrofy*, *Avarii* (both meaning "Car Accidents"), *Aktsii* ("Shares"), *Apelsiny v Abhazii* ("Oranges in Abhazia") or more or less plausible *Adiulter s amerikanskim aktsentom* ("Adultery with an American Accent") and *Arbuz i ananas v amerikanskoi armii* ("A Water-melon and a Pine-apple in the American Army") are accompanied by unclear, ambiguous or senseless phrases like *Alkogol v aranzhirovke s angliiskogo* ("Alcohol in an Arrangement from the English language"),

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[128] Baskette, Floyd K., Sissors, Jack Z., and Brooks, Brian S. *The Art of Editing*, 282.

*Atomnyi aromat agenta Armenii* ("The Atomic Aroma of the Agent for Armenia") or "Abonement na 'Abort-tury' v Antarktide" ("A Season Pass for the Abortion Tours in Antarctica"). With regard to the content, the *A*-letter page is one of the most balanced, since several pages do not contain a single meaningful phrase. The inanity of quasi-headlines like *Partizany predlozhili proizvesti pokhorony pashteta* ("Partisans suggested organizing a funeral for the pâté," *P*-letter page, fig. 92) or *Lishnie lapki luchshe lysiny* ("Extra paws are better than a bald patch," *L*-letter page, fig. 93), or *Iantarnyi iachmen iz iadernogo iaitsa* ("Amber Barley from a Nuclear Egg," *Ia*-letter page, fig. 94) is revealed on the discursive level irrespective of their actual positioning, spacing or employed typeface. Although in some cases an insufficient amount of white space around the headlines affects legibility and makes it difficult for the reader to determine whether he or she is dealing with two adjacent (or bumped) headlines or words of the same heading phrase, the elements of layout primarily serve either to organise logically incongruous semantic units into structural unities, or to separate individual semantically unbound constructs from other verbal clusters organized by the same principles. The application of a similar technique was demonstrated by Sergei Sigei as early as the late 1960s, specifically in his series of works composed of unconventionally arranged verb clusters with letter-forms cut out of newspapers and other printed materials. In Sigei's composition, unorthodox layout leads the reader in an orderly manner through the strategic placement of phrases, many of which are either ambiguous or written in transrational language. Interestingly, some of Sigei's composition, like his "Izuchenie mozga Lenina" ("Study of Lenin's Brain," fig. 95) with an irreconcilable subtitle "the manifesto," are rhymed. This particular work employs letter-forms cut out of the 1927 issue of the newspaper *Izvestiia* (where the article under the same title was published), which attaches greater importance to its bitter, if not virulent, mockery. In his 1974 poem "S piati tochek zrenii[a]" ("From Five Points of Vie[w]," fig. 96), Sigei employs another technique which is often found in Dmitrieva's project, namely, defragmentation of the text in smaller units and their further arrangement in a manner which predetermines their accessibility from literally various points of view. At the interpretant level such an approach would not do the poem justice, inasmuch as the page should be moved in various directions (upside down, clockwise, counter clockwise, etc.) for the message to be read. At the iconic level the poem can be viewed as an attempt to visualize the dynamics of perception by making the physical movement of the page an urgent necessity.

Sigel's compositions, each being designed on a separate page, are definitely meant for reading (which may be followed by further manipulative attempts on the part of the reader), inasmuch as ironic, sarcastic, humorous or other connotative meanings of verbal messages are of primary importance. However, the reader's potential for reading all Dmitrieva's verbal messages, which are quite dense on many pages, is highly problematic. But we have to recognize that the absurdity of Dmitrieva's quasi-headline world is revealed primarily through verbal means, whereas typograpy and make-up are used as supplementary devices. When Dmitrieva argues that the attempted narrativization of reality is similar to the process of "casting the mirage in bronze" or "wrapping the emptiness in silk and velvet,"[129] she apparently refers to the discursive aspect of her composition. Consequently, the unidimensional and superfluous world of headlines is created by limited graphic means. Although headlines are set in different ways, the author mostly resorts to various typefaces and the specific size, weight, width of letters, length of line, spacing between lines and style in which to set the message. The choice of these seven dimensions usually affects the readibility of headlines,[130] and thus receives special attention of a newspaper editor. As far as headline alignment is concerned, Dmitrieva employs headings set flush left or right, or flushed both sides, the pyramid and the inverted pyramid, the stepline, although headlines with zigzagged margins are most frequent. Sometimes the contrast of light and bold lines is played upon as well. In general the typography itself is not experimental or innovative, inasmuch as the author employs traditional and contemporary typefaces found in Russian newspapers. Although condensed and expanded types are occasionally used, many letterforms are monotonously repeated, sans serif and boldface being the most common. Therefore the graphic substance of Dmitrieva's composition is not particularly prepossessive, even if some words are framed, underlined or shadowed, or written in italics, or extra-bold letter forms. Occasionally the author attempts puns based on typographic effect. Thus, in the inscription *Pobedila pravda* ("Truth has won") from the *P*-letter page, the noun *pravda* is written in the typeface characteristic of the newspaper *Pravda*, the mouthpiece of the USSR Communist party, which suggests semantic syllepsis.

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[129] Dmitrieva, Olga "Literaturnala ucheba," n. pag.

[130] Baskette, Floyd K., Sissors, Jack Z., and Brooks. Brian S. *The Art of Editing,* 244

The layout of many pages is more experimental, although this suggests an indebtedness to the familiar works of Russian Futurists and Constructivists. Besides linear horizontal and vertical word arrangement, the author employs slantwise (*N*-letter page), circular (O-letter page) and mixed patterns. The *D*-letter pattern possibly alludes to the rayonist technique (Fig. 97), developed by Russian avant-garde artists Mikhail Larionov and Natalia Goncharova and applied to poetry by Konstantin Bolshakov, a member of the Tsentrifuga literary group. The *Shch*-letter page creates a visual illusion of the folded page with inflections or final parts of words written in a column on the surface of the visible ragged right side. Only the first entry *shchi* can stand for both a meaningful noun ("cabbage soup") and the typical inflection of the plural nouns of the mixed group which end in voiceless palative fricative. All other entries are truncated words (visually separated from their invisible beginnings by a dotted line), which nonetheless can be easily reconstructed by a native speaker.

Although each individual page demands a certain amount of attention on the part of the reader, and many messages are witty and whimsical indeed, consistent reading of the work page by page, or even inscription by inscription at the same page, is problematic at best. The monotonous (verbal rather than visual) succession of semantically unrelated and predominantly nominative sentences cannot be read as an integral discourse. Instead, multiple possibilities of readings are presupposed in many pages by the layout, especially of the use of mixed or complex patterns, as well as by the frequent absence of punctuation marks. As the reader follows through word combinations and clichés, he creates his own discourse. Arrows, colons, dashes, dotted lines connecting words and other signs of physical signification which point at a possible way of reading, still leave enough space for the reader's manipulation of verbal blocks. The process of reading can start at any page or any place on the page, and the reader is invited to select his own entrance and direction of reading without being forced to follow the conventional pattern of eye-gliding. On some pages (*D*-page, O-letter page, *Ch*-letter page, *Sh*-letter page, to mention only a few), the traditional way of reading from left to right is technically impossible due to the specific line arrangement – radial, non-linear, vertical or slantwise. Dmitrieva's composition responds to the Sartrean observation that "the writer appeals to the reader's freedom to collaborate in the production of his work"[131] in both ways, discursive and visual. Moreover, in addition to pages abundant with easily rearranged word constituents, four non-discursive pages are incorporated in the composition, as well as the page containing a single word *iogurty* ("yogurts"), which is accompanied by allographs of the same letter indicating the semivowel *I*. Non-discursive pages are based on visual play with the graphemes of the Russian alphabet which are never or seldom used as the initial letters of a word. Both the page with a hard sign (used for separation of a vowel and a preceeding consonant in order to depalatalize the latter) and the page with a soft sign (indicating palatalization of consonants) are shaped as abstract compositions. The amalgamation of hard signs forms a monolithic solid shape unit (fig. 98), whereas soft signs are freely dispersed around the page (Fig. 99). The graphic representation of the letter *e* on the non-discursive E-letter page somewhat resembles the set of Russian nesting dolls ("matryoshki"), identical in shape and often in color but different in size (Fig. 100). The dots of the letter *e* are shaped as *e* of the appropriate smaller size, each of them is also crowned by the two tiny *e*'s. On the Y-letter page the vertical and horizontal successions of the letter *y* form the cross. The vertical successions are preceded by the syllable *ry* and concluded by *ly!*. This particular configuration, however, is not well motivated. Although on the verbal level non-discursive pages are not well integrated into the body of the work, as far as typography and layout are concerned, they are created in the same vein as the rest of the composition.

The multivariant potential of reading in a certain sense mimics the conceptual aspect of Dmitrieva's composition structured analogically with newspaper descriptions of reality. When we read newspapers, we often start reading from the final or middle page, scan headlines, read separate fragments of the texts, return to reread them, thus reconstructing our own image of reality from the facts imposed by journalists. Understandingly, in Dmitrieva's composition this mechanism is visualized in accordance with the author's belief that only the visual image conveys the essence of reality.

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[131] Sartre, Jean-Paul. *What isLiterature?* Tr. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 40.

The title page of the projects (Fig. 101) also calls attention to itself, inasmuch as it is based on visual asteismus, or "clever banter or badinage which praises or flatters while appearing to blame or reproach."[132] The title of the work and its typography unmistakably allude to the well-known Russain critical journal *Literaturnaia ucheba*. On closer examination, however, the four pages of text comprise repetitive chains of newspaper and advertisement clippings arranged in different way on each page. Given the reputation of the journal as a serious scholarly edition, such a visual image cannot be regarded as flattering.

If Dmitrieva in her project tends to visual deconstruction of the semantics which reflects the disintegration of modern times, many other Russian visualists resort to conceptual manipulation with smaller verbal units, primarily words. Owing to a high degree of segmentability exemplified by the Russian language, word segmentation typically resulting in sonal and semantic games has been successfully practiced by the proponents of transrational language or *zaum*. However, Russian Futurists and Constructivists did not not necessarily accompany their radical language-orientated poetic experimentation with the simultaneous visualization of discourse. This gap in exploring the visual properties of transrational language has been successfully covered by the contemporary Russian visual poets. Among the poets who work along these lines, the St. Petersburg-based author Boris Konstrictor (Boris Vantalov) should be recognized as a successor of the Russian Futurists. Konstrictor's experimentation with the semantics of individual structural units of the word began as early as the 1970s, when he was one of the principal authors of the journal *Transponanse* published by Nikonova and Sigei. His deconstructivist games, however, use conventional Russian rather than exploring the realm of neology. For example, "Tema Mno"[133] (Fig. 102) is a minimal coordinated poem, consisting of two words, for both of which the same syllable *te* is the initial element. The two words of the poem read *tema* ("theme") and *temno* (an adverb derived from the adjective "dark"). The semantics of the last word is not only related to the dark background of the composition, but also suggestive on a metaphorical level, given that the poem was created in the gloomy period of economical and political instability. The referential code of the poem, however, has not been significantly altered in the social paradigm of the 1990s, nor has it lost its bitter connotation. In another work by the same author[134] (Fig. 103) the initial element *ali* (visually emphasized by the letter-size) coordinates with three different word stems, thus forming three different words, namely, *Alibaba* (Ali-Baba), *aligote* (white or pink inexpensive table wine produced in the southern areas of the former Soviet Union) and *alimenty* (child support or maintenance). A very loose thematic correlation of the three elements is feasible, though not obvious. In the poem "Tiurma-mama"[135] ("Prison-mama," fig. 104) the final element of the first word simultaneously serves as the initial one for the second noun, both being arranged in a grid-like structure, which further alludes to the composition's semantics. "Konets"[136] ("The End," fig. 105) visually outlines the letters of the last syllable of the word itself; the minimal structural unit, however, is employed for letter writing is "ko," the first syllable of the word. Not infrequently the word's decomposition is followed by semantization of its constituents for the purpose of punning. In "Artbuz"[137] (Fig. 106) the Russian word *ar[t]buz* ("watermelon") is decomposed in the English noun "art" and the transcription of the colloquialism "booze." Due to the fact that the Russian *arbuz* is spelled and pronounced without the letter *t*, this particular grapheme is visually crossed out by the overlapping "r." Although presented as the contamination of the two English words the Russian noun *arbuz* is not a portmanteau word at all. This noun is a borrowing from the Persian word *χarbūza*, or "melon," which in its turn is the compound noun consisting of the two constituents, namely *χer* ("donkey") and *būčinā* ("cucumber"), which literally means "a donkey's cucumber".[138] Thus, Konstriktor's etymological attempt is obviously misleading, which by no means diminishes its comic effect. In general, word-play based on polyglotism is more characteristic of Russian émigré writers (Vladimir Nabokov's "verbal acrobatics"[139] attempted in several language immediately comes to mind), although it is not alien to authors residing in Russia. Konstriktor's creative output convincingly attests to it, and so does that of Sigei, Nikonova, Bulatov, or Melnikov. It should also be mentioned that Konstriktor's works in either language are highly recognizable by his specific off-handed manner of reproduction. As a rule, his works are composed without technical precision or iconic elegance as if to emphasize the significance of the linguistic game as such.

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[132] Dupriez, Bernard. *A Dictionary of Literary Devices: Gradus, A-Z.* Tr. Albert W. Halsall (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 73.

[133] *Chernovik* 3 (1990): 127.

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[134] *Novoe literaturnoe obozenie* 16 (1995): 242.

[135] *Novoe literaturnoe obozenie* 16 (1995): 243.

[136] l*Novoe literaturnoe obozenie* 16 (1995): 243.

[137] *Novoe literaturnoe obozenie* 16 (1995):240

[138] Shipova, E.N. *Slovar tiurkizmov v russkom lazyke* (Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1976),114.

Unlike Konstriktor's off-handed compositions, individual multicolored panels entitled "Fragmenty" ("Fragments") by St-Petersburg author Aleksandr Gornon (pen name of Aleksandr Sokolov) attract attention by their apparent iconographic power. Many of them are imaged phrases, in which words are pictorially enhanced by specific letter arrangement, typesetting and colour effects. In some panels words or word segments are also framed; this framing technique can result in extending word-imagery into three-dimensional compositions within a circumscribed space. A closer reading of Gornon's pictorially articulative panels, however, persuades one that their effective layouts are by no means autonomous; on the contrary, they are dependent, to a large extent, on their verbal components, if not totally motivated by the latter Each of Gornon's compositions is based on a verbal pun (or sequence of puns), which are visualized for the reader's successful interaction with the text. By successful interaction I do not mean exclusively the reader's accurate decoding of the verbal message, although Gornon's compositions are unquestionably meant for understanding. What is more important, however, is that Gornon's texts, brief and seemingly unsophisticated as they are, not only provoke the reader's continually changing projections in "the formation of syntheses," crucial for the act of reading,[140] but also deliberately stimulate projection shifts. Various visual markers (change of colour, typesetting, letter size, letter arrangement, etc.) are utilized as traffic signals for the reader to follow a perceptible direction, but the same signals may offer the denial of language determinism. A brief example may illustrate this point. The fork-shaped

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[139] Luxemburg, Alexander, and Rakhimkulova, Galina. *Magister igry Vivian van Bok :Igra slov v proze Vladimira Nabokova v svete teortii kalambura* (Rostov-on-Don: n. p., 1996), 183.

[140] Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Trans. Der Akt Des Lesens. (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1978), 135.

element (Fig. 107), sectioned from one of Gornon's above-mentioned poetic compositions, consists of several word segments to be synthesised into words or even phrases. The capital letter *B*, drawn in blue and red on the left, stands for the initial letter of several words, i e. *vklad* ("deposit"), *v* (preposition "in"), *Volkovo* (name of the cemetery in St.-Petersburg), as well as *volk* ("wolf"), which may be discerned by following either the clockwise or zigzag pattern of reading of the first graphemes. The top line of this visual unit is written in red, while the middle one is in black, and the bottom is in blue. The three-coloured cursive type capital *L* in the centre of the section obviously serves as a shared element for all three lines (thus functionally resembling the concordant constituent in the baroque coordinated verse), but its centred position as well as its enlarged size and distinguished letter type signifies its special status in the verbal discourse. The capital *L* can be easily viewed as an initial element for shorter words which may be discerned within the kernel line structures. For the general understanding of the poem these additional linguistic units have little significance. However, the reader's efforts to decipher them involves the former in a greater interaction with the text, achieved thorough segmentation and word game. Although, in most cases the linear sequence of reading leads the reader to the comprehension of the work as rhymed and rhythmical verse, these additional entrances to manipulation of word segments, turn into clues for a more sophisticated perception of the work. Boris Shifrin defines Gornon's verbal metamorphoses as "homonymic games,"[141] in which words inosculate in combinations of confused articulation and then disperse with difficulty. It is true that the brief messages of Gornon's compositions in most cases are ambiguous, but this is primarily due to the paronomastic effects. Each textual components of Gornon's fragments has several hypothetical readings due to the potential or actual segmentation (the latter is visually emphasized) of the conventional poetic lines and deliberate misspelling of individual words. This misspelling, however, typically reflects the actual manner of Russian pronunciation. Gornon's technique is primarily based on the segmentability of the Russian language and its facility of building new words by compounding and by the addition of affixes. It is obvious that the author consciously plays on the phonation and the meaning of words. Marked segments (either by colour or letter shape) may be combined in various ways to create semantically different textual compositions. When pushed to extremes, paronomasia becomes a way of creating new meanings in the verbal discourse. Their semantic comprehension depends as much on the reader as on the text. Not surprisingly, Gornon's brief messages require a high proficiency in Russian to be understood as sophisticated poetic puns open to a multiplicity of readings, rather than meaningless or absurd word combinations.

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[141] Shifrin, Boris. "Nabrosok k poetike Aleksandra Gornona," *Chernovik* 10 (1994): 32.

One of Gornon's compositions literally reads as follows: *pomestnyi dom mestoimene / Bard-Eldoradovye skhvatki / Na zubyka puzatimnene / V laitse ukokany dokladki* ("Manor house pronoun / Bard-Eldorado contractions / On thetoothofth bullthepot-belliedopinion / In the egg layers crashed," fig. 108). At first sight this phrase is totally absurd, however, a closer reading and some structural (or rather destructured) manipulations reveals the essence and playfulness of the lines. The first line can be read as "The manor house is the place / estate" inasmuch as the word *mestoimene* ("pronoun") may be segmented in two new words *mesto* ("place") and *imene* ("estate"). The specific location of the phrase, written above the top contour of the egg may further suggests that the egg-shell is the place, estate or manor-house for the chicken which has not hatched yet. If we consider the golden crown on the top of the egg as the sign of the noble status, then we can easily relate it to such attributes of high social status as estates and manor-houses. In the second line the word combination *Eldoradovye skhvatki* in which *Eldorado* as a place of great riches is obviously linked to the first line. Nonetheless, it can be easily truncated to *radovye skhvatki*, which is the common way of pronouncing the set expression *rodovye skhvatki* ("birth pangs"), which is probably associated with the process of the chicken's hatching. The very last line continues the same technique. The verb *ukokony* which indicates the pronunciation of the slang word meaning "to be crashed" is broken down syllabically by the applied colour scheme. The first syllable *u* in brown is visually separated from other syllables of the word written in red. The truncated word *kokony* means "cocoons." At this point the associative chain encompasses words "cocoon," "egg" and "manor-house." The relationship between the two first elements is based on their physical affinity (the physical similarity of the shape), while the last two words are linked together by the logical association elaborated in the first line of the discourse and visualized by the picture.

Gornon's "rhetoric of inarticulateness"[142] does not necessarily depend on means of visualization which can be limited to the spatial arrangement of words, as in his black and white composition "I dveri nastezh otvariag"[143] ("And open the door wide," where the verb "open" is replaced by its phonetic approximation meaning "from Varangians," fig. 109). Arranged linearly in the conventional way the phrase would still contain the pun. Unconventional arrangement of syllables and words both emphasizes the linguistic game attempted by the author and creates the stylized visual image related to the text. Sometimes the graphic configurations of the linguistic elements have self-sufficient meanings inasmuch as it does not produce any logical or visual association with the text, as it occurs in the work "Toskandachkalobtsy-Ezopy," which comprises the sequence of the overlapped words "ennui," "off-hand," "followers of Chkalov" (Valerii Chkalov is the famous pilot of the 1930s), and "Aesops." Nonetheless, in most cases visual means play a supplementary or supportive role and add some specific information rather than duplicate the verbal message at the non-textual level. The significance of the visual component of the Gornon's works permits the inclusion of "Fragments" and his other compositions in the body of visual poetry despite their strong commitment to purely linguistic word-play.

Many of Sergei Biriukov's linguistic games can simultaneously be qualified as visual compositions, although the Tambov-based scholar and poet is engaged in non-visualized linguistic experimentation as well. Burikov's visual compositions are typically the structured word plays with explicit or implied dynamics. "Sonata do-mi-no,"[144] (Fig. 110) with the subtitle "play duets," is a witty visual pun based on the structural reinterpretation of the word *domino* ("dominoes"). Therefore the syllables *do* and *mi*, both being names of musical notes, are matched with halves of dice each having a different number of spots (4 and 3). The last syllable *no*, which does not correspond to any musical note, is paired with a hollow half of the dice. The subtitle of the work, obviously borrowed from musical vocabulary, nonetheless suggests the rule of the game which requires at least two players, conceivably the author himself and the reader. "Solonka padaiushchaia bryzgami"[145] ("Sprinkling Falling Salt-shaker," fig. 111) is a visual metaphor of the verbal message, in which the last two words are graphically represented as individual syllabical units corresponding to splashes. His "Ten shorokh teni"[146] ("Shadow, Rustle of Shadow," fig. 112) is a far more inventive composition, which creates both the acoustic and the visual effect.

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[142] Shifrin, 32.

[143] *Chernovik* 6 (1992): 133.

[144] Biriukov, Sergei. *Muza Zaumi* (Tambov: n. p., 1991), 26.

Being a scholar as well as an enthusiastic proponent of the national non-traditional literature, Biriukov often alludes to Russian avant-garde literature and the art of the past decades in his own compositions, thus paying tribute to his predecessors in literary and artistic experimentation. "In Memoria Supremus" (Fig. 113) is one of works created in this artistic vein. Malevich's concept of the "pure feeling" or the "sensitivity of pure non-objectivity"[147] which is incarnated in simple and self-reverential geometrical forms is echoed in Biriukov's work with the dynamic diagonal placement of several scarlet triangles on the top.

Among the poets who successfully transpose linear linguistic poetry into non-linear or visual form is the Moscow-based poet Willi Melnikov-Stårqvist. Melnikov's approach to language is a unique and intricate phenomenon which is not the focus of the present study. It would be relevant to mention, however, that Melnikov's poetic works written in his native Russian, contain words and expressions from 87 dead and living languages. Melnikov is not the first contemporary Russian poet to attempt multilinguistic experimentation of this type. At the turn of the 1970s Mikhail Eremin inserted individual pictographs and ideograms in his experimental texts, providing the latter with the glossary.[148] Melnikov, however, is interested in fusing Russian and foreign elements on the morphological level rather than in producing macaronic verses. In his creations the poet typically replaces Russian syllables with phonetically similar syllables from other languages, the meaning of which may be close to that of their Russian counterparts, but may also differ radically. This semantic shift provides the kernel word with additional and often unanticipated or unforseen connotations; the latter are habitually perceived as an abstruse insight in the word semantics. Melnikov calls this unique linguistic hybrid "muftolingua," which is the contamination of the Russian noun *mufta* meaning "coupling" or "sleeve joint" with the Latin word for language.[149] As the poet admits, "muftolingua" is "not a goal in itself, but a mode through which you can indifinitely expand the semantic volume of the text."[150] The exploration of the language's semantic potential, however, does not prevent Melnikov from experimentation with the visual aspect of the message. Typically, the borrowed syllables of his linguistic blends are graphically marked (Fig. 114). In one of his first collections *In-SPE* dated from 1995, "muftalingual" neologisms as well as key words and phrases are visually accentuated by hand-writing, enlarged letter size, boldness and other typographical devices. In the most recent works of the same author the collage technique (in which photography is an important communicative media) is fused with linguistic games in the form of the "ideographic photopoetry" or "photopoetic ideograms," which are understood as "poetic ideograms" or "modified apocryphal works," "unaffected by aging, rusting, and corrosion."[151] Melnikov's photopoetic ideograms are typically anchored to actual socio-political situations and incorporate their recognizable physical signs. Nonetheless, one of the most characteristic images, travelling from one of Melnikov's composition to another, is a picture or a photograph of an orthodox temple, erected straight, upside down or slightly bent, which is traditionally understood as a metaphor of spirituality. Besides, it could also stand for the individual hope of the author (who claims to be a lay priest[152]) for revitalization of spirituality in the country, smashed by economic chaos and moral degradation. As a rule, the visual symbol of spirituality is juxtaposed with the verbal message reflecting or punning on the most popular mottos or ideological clichés of the time, thus resulting in a sharp contrast between the two referents. The visual and verbal levels of Melnikov's compositions practically never duplicate each other, although there may be a logical association between their components, as in the untitled "photopoetic ideogram" (fig. 115), in which the verbal message reads as "the rate of a dollar exchange to a Caesarian dinar is falling down and burning itself out in the thick stratum of atmosphere." This handwritten phrase is obviously related to the incorporated photograph of the Continent Bank signboard, yet it by no means serves as a bare inscription. In Melnikov's compositions individual components are meticulously integrated into meaningful semantic unity, which is open for multiple interactions between the reader and the work.

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[145] Biriukov, 27.

[146] Biriukov, 6.

[147] Barron, Stephanie, and Tuchman, Maurice, eds. *The Avant-Garde in Russia, 1910-1930: New Perspectives*, 196.

[148] Kuzminsky, Konstantin K., and Kovalev, Gregory L. *The Blue Lagoon Anthology of Modern Russian Poetry*. Vol. 1 (1980), 219-221.

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[149] Henry, Patrick. "He Speaks In Tongues – 87 of Them," *The Moscow Times*, August 31 (1995), 24.

[150] Melnikov, Willi. *Vozniknovestnik iz nepredskazamka* (Moscow: Moskovskii gosudarstvennyi muzei Vadima Sidura, 1998), 16.

[151] Melnikov, Willi. "Vozniknovestnik v inoskazamke." *Edinorog: Kniga pervaia* (Moscow: Vremennoe ob"edinenie, 1996), n. pag.

[152] Henry, Patrick. "He Speaks In Tongues – 87 of Them," 24.

As Sergei Biriukov states, another form of visual writing within the linguistic framework, a palindrome, based on the letter-unit or word-unit variety,[153] has recently gained immense popularity in Russia.[154] Judging from the works published, it is the literal palindrome, in which both the order of the words and the order of letters in the words are reversed rather than its verbal counterpart (in which merely the order of words is reversed) or contradictory palindrome (in which the meaning of the reversed line contradicts that of the straight reading) that has most appeal for the Russian poets. Besides regular publication of palindromic texts in recent periodicals and poetic collections, and noticeable activity of Moscow palindrome fans, the Club of the Russian palindrome was founded in 1992 in the provincial city of Kursk; its informational forum and mouthpiece, the two page newspaper *AmfiRifma* (a palindromic neologism derived from the word *AntiRhyme*) with a circulation rarely exceeeding 100 copies, was established the same year. Besides publication of palindromic works contributed by the authors from many Russian regions, *AmfiRifma* provides its readers with some theoretical surveys and discussion, bibliographical information and selected news pertaining to the palindrome. For many practitioners and lovers of the form, the activity of the Club of the Russian palindrome and its printed organ in particular facilitates noticeable revitalization of palindromic writing in the country. Nonetheless, Russian poets, who are probably no less concerned with the development of this form than their Ukrainian colleagues, still cannot boast the impressive achievements which Ukrainian practitioners have revealed in both the technique of palindromic writing itself and in its visualization. According to many Ukrainian visual poets, a palindrome unquestionably enjoys equal rights with other forms of visual poetry, even if its sound component is of primary importance for the text perception. However, as Mykola Miroshnychenko rightfully suggests, palindromic audio symmetry can be achieved exclusively in the situation when only one-syllable symmetrical words are used as building units of the text. However, palindromes which contain only symmetrical words, as a classical example "Otto tenet mappam, madidam tenet Otto," quoted by J. H. Alsted,[155] in which the reverse order of reading makes up the identical text in terms of spelling, stress pattern and meaning, is hardly possible in inflectioned languages like Russian or Ukrainian. In all other cases, typically occurring recombination of letters into different groups, which leads to a stress shift of the reversal phonation, makes the sound symmetry unattainable. However, as far as their graphic aspect is concerned, most palindromes (and especially those which do not have punctuation marks within a line structure) demonstrate a high level of symmetrical precision and accuracy.[156] Therefore, Ukrainian palindromists express the strong determination of interpreting palindrome as a visual form of poetry, based on optical effects, rather than as a subgenre of linguistic or sound literature.[157] Such an assumption alone leads to various experimentations in the domain of the videopalindrome, that is, a palindrome with explicit or intensified visual or optical effects. But for Russian poets and scholars the palindrome's primary attraction lies in the formal precision of the rigid structure and semantic accuracy of this technically demanding poetic form.[158] To date none of them has attempted to scrutinize such immanent characteristics of the palindrome as its lettristic symmetry and reflective inversion, which are obvious visual dimensions of the complex palindrome. Although many contemporary Russian poets show their interest in the palindromic form, their creativity usually evolves within the framework set by Valerii Briusov, Velimir Khlebnikov, Ilia Selvinskii, and Semen Kirsanov in the first part of the century; the above-mentioned poets, in turn, were concerned with evolving rather than reforming the traditional form of palindrome as it existed in Russian literature from the Baroque era, and, in most cases, at making simply close imitations of the best works by Ukrainian authors of the Baroque.[159] Contemporary Russian authors (the late Nikolai Ladygin and Vladimir Gershuni, and Sergei Sigei, Dmitrii Avaliani, Boris Goldshtein, Vladimir Rybinskii, Aleksei Erlikh and others) focus their attention primarily on the linguistic peculiarities of palindromic discourse, which is a common approach to palindromic writing. Thus, Howard Bergerson, a researcher of the form, claims that "the palindromic poet's purpose is to try to make something new and different *via words as such*, letting their meanings go hang, relatively – at any rate their more familiar associations."[160] Therefore, as Bergerson further suggests, "palindromes are literary chess,"[161] stressing in the first place such technical qualities of the two games (inasmuch as 'palindromeness' may be considered as a literary or rather linguistic game) as transformations, combinatorics, problem solving, etc. Although Bergerson suggests that "the composing of palindromes is a fine art,"[162] the question of the possible visual dimension of a palindrome has never appeared in his work, and by graphic palindromes he simply understands the palindromes, which are not reversible phonetically.

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[153] As Howard W. Bergerson suggests, it is posiible "to choose units larger than single letters, such as digrams (pairs of consecutive letters [...] or trigrams for palindromic writing, as well as even units of "entirely different kinds, having variable length, such as syllables, morphemes, or words." See: Bergerson, Howard W. *Palindromes and Anagrams* (New York: Dover Publications, 1973), vi. And yet a letter remains the principle structural unit for the overwhelming majority of palindromes.

[154] Biruikov, Sergei. "Opyt tipo." *AmfiRifma* 19 (1995): 2.

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[155] Alsted, H.J. *Scientiarum Omnium Encyclopedia* Vol. 1 ( Lyons: Sumptibus pannis Antonii Hvgetan filij, & Marei Antonii Ravavd: 1649), 550.

[156] Miroshnychenko, Mykola. "Pobachyty lunu navyvorot." *Zryma ryma* 1 (1998): 19.

[157] See: Miroshnychenko, Mykola. "Pobachyty lunu navyvorot," *Zryma ryma* 1 (1998), 14-22; Soroka, Mykola "Rak literalnyi v istorii ukrainskoi literatury," *Zryma ryma* 1 (1998), 33-35; Korol, Myroslav. "Spriamovana do absoliutu," *Zryma ryma* 1 (1998), 37-38.

[158] See: Grigorev, V. P. *Grammatika idiostilia. V. Khlebnikov* (Moscow: Nauka, 1983); Biriukov, Sergei. *Zevgma: Russkaia poeziia ot manerizma do postmodernizma,* 100- 111; Rudelev, Vladimir. "Vyshaia forma poezii," *AmfiRifma* 13 (1994), 1; Bubnov, A.V. *Iasykovye osobennosti russkogo palindroma. Avtoreferat dissertatsii na soiskanie stepeni kandidata filologicheskikh nauk.* (Tambov: Tambovskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 1997).

[159] Čiżzewskij, Dmitrij. *History of Russian Literature: From the Eleventh Century to the End of the Baroque* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1962), 367.

[160] Bergerson, Howard W. *Palindromes and Anagrams,* 2.

[161] Bergerson., 2.

[162] Bergerson., 2.

Most Russian poets share the same understanding of a palindrome as primarily linguistic experimentation or word game.

Not surprisingly, the videopalindrome which proliferates in contemporary Ukrainian visual poetry, is far from being a productive poetic subform in Russian literature. Even the Muscovite Dmitrii Avaliani, who is keen on experimentation with the reflecting potential of the Russian typography (and specifically with words which present different but meaningful linguistic units while being read straight and upside down, as in the work "Patron" ("Cartridge" as well as "boss") – "Molitva" ("Prayer")[163] (Fig. 116[164]) creates visually canonical works when it comes to palindromes. Tellingly, the original palindromic collage of Avaliani's one-line palindromes has been composed by another palindromist, Aleksandr Bubnov, the Kursk-based scholar, poet and performer, who is one of the most fertile and inventive contemporary Russian palindromists. In addition to his scholarly activity (which is mainly focused on developing the linguistic aspects of the Russian palindrome) Bubnov unceasingly experiments with the palindromic form and edits manuscript journals *AmfiRifma*, *Iz-pod pera Aleksandra Bubnova* (*From under the Pen of Aleksandr Bubnov*), both of which include a broad variety of materials on the palindrome. Among Bubnov's most impressive productions is the letter-digital palindromes (Fig. 117), unknown in the Russian tradition,[165] in which both letters and digits (primarily those which resemble certain letters) serve as structural interchangeable units; "videocyclodroms" understood as a visual poem based on locked and incessant palindromic structures like "Tolpe teplo" ("The Crowd is Warm," fig. 118),[166] and other forms of the videopalindrome. He is also responsible for introducing the photopalindrome, in which palindromic lines are attached as inscriptions to photographs, frequently with explicit humorous or ironic connotation. In most compositions of this type the photograph functions as an illustration to the palindromic inscription rather than an integral element of the composition.

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[163] As far as terminology is concerned, it is difficult to define outcomes of Avaliani's innovative transformations. Sergei Biriukov, however, refers to this phenomena as the "graphic anagrammatism." (See: Biriukov, Sergei. "...I poisk suti nezhnoi..." *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 16 (1995): 274.

[164] *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 16 (1995): 281.

[165] *Iz-pod pera* 21(1994): 1.

[166] *Iz-pod pera Aleksandra Bubnova* 23(1994): 2.

Moreover, the palindromic inscription does not come from within the work; it is the appended information, typically discernible without any visual image. Probably for this reason the author does not explore the visual properties of the language to the extent he does in his videopalindromes. "Ishchi puzu pishchi" ("Search for the Food for Your Paunch," fig. 119) differs from a ludicrous photograph only by the palindromic nature of its inscription which reads alike backwards and forwards; but each component of this work is exceedingly self-sufficient. Nonetheless, the collage technique (of which photography is a part), which includes a palindromic text, seems to be an interesting device to be developed, as well as a new avenue for the traditional form to progress. The rigid structure of either verbal or literal palindromes does not leave much room for experimentation within the textual dimension of the message; and therefore, visualization seems to be one of the most promising ways of developing the canonical linear palindromic form. In this respect, Bubnov's approach to palindrome as to a form not limited to linguistic experimentation deserves closer attention and, probably, a separate study.

Some linguistic deformations (primarily on the syntactical level), matching the visual impressions of the represented objects or notions, have been attempted by the young Irkutsk-based poet Aleksandr Surikov in his recent book *Tako-dinoko*, the title of which stands for a structural redistribution of the syllables forming the phrase *Tak odinoko* ("So Alone).[167] Besides the utilization of nonconventional syntax and the occasional creation of neologisms, Surikov strives for an unusual line arrangement, which forces the reader to turn the book clockwise or upside down in the process of reading. Sometimes this required motion and the visual dimensions of the work are justified by the context, as in the poem "Negr i taburetka" ("Black Man and Stool", fig. 120), or in untitled verse "Sverkhu nebo, snizy solntce" ("Above is the sky, beneath is the sun," fig. 121), although in some works the breakage with the linearity or other means of emphasizing layout seem to be completely divorced from the discourse semantics, as happens in the poem "Ee korova" ("Her Cow"). Another noticeable example from the same book is a palindromic poem in which individual words are isolated in a manner reminiscent of the Russian Futurists' single-word lines with an obvious sonoric effect, achieved by alliteration and assonance. But, in general, Surikov is more concerned with the figure poems and cryptographic or pseudo-cryptographic scripts. The latter is used as a medium in his poem "Dvornik" ("Janitor," fig. 122), which looks unconventional but is quite comprehensible notwithstanding, at least for the reader with a reasonably high level of Russian language proficiency, inasmuch as the visual dimensions of the stylized letters resemble their actual shapes. Nonetheless, the poet also provides more traditional typographic variant of this poem for those who are unable or not willing to decipher his visual cryptography.

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[167] Surikov, Al-dr. *Tako-dinoko* (Moscow: Agro-risk, 1996).

Clearly, visual poetry based on linguistic experimentation has become a very important and representative part of contemporary Russian visual writing, even though certain researchers refuse to grant the status of visual poetry to this type of creation. Probably for this reason Sergei Sigei, in his brief survey of contemporary Russian visual poetry, while drawing attention to experimentation with typography and visualization through the materiality and organization of the constituents, completely ignores the tendency of visualization in experimental linguistic poetry. Generally speaking, this tendency is not a new phenomenon in the history of Russian visual poetry. Some attempts to fuse linguistic and visual experimentation have been made by Russian constructivists, and Aleksei Chicherin in particular. However, as far as the language is concerned, Chicherin was mainly preoccupied with the correlation between the phonetic qualities of the language and their graphic representation. Moreover, for Constructivists, linguistic innovations and exploration have never been the main focus of their creative attention. It was the Futurists who dissected the language for its further exploration, but commonly they were not concerned with the visual properties of their material. Even Khlebnikov, who both explores various aspects of the language in the most innovative and bold manner and theorizes various linguistic phenomena, never attempts to highlight visually the semantically dominant units, nor does he break with the conventional sequence of reading or with the linearity of the discourse.[168] Only in the works of contemporary Russian visual poets is some equilibrium attempted in the visual and linguistic experimentation. Nonetheless, it would be prudent to speak about a tendency rather than an established practice in Russian visual poetry. And, as I have tried to show, alongside this direction of creativity a number of other experimentations are successfully being carried out by the visual poets of Russia.

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[168] White, John J. *Literary Futurism. Aspects of the First Avant Garde,* 276.

## RUSSIAN VISUAL POETRY IN WESTERN EUROPE

Among a few expatriate visual practitioners who presently reside and work in Western Europe Elisabeth Netzkowa (Elizaveta Mnatsakanjan or Mnatsakanova) is one of the most interesting and notable. Born in Baku in 1922, she belongs to the older generation of Russian visualists. Netzkowa began to produce handwritten literary-artistic books as early as late 1940s, although she never attempted to publish her works in the Soviet Union. In 1975 she emigrated to Austria, where her literary and artistic talent flourished. It was there where her visual compositions were first published and welcomed by critics and the general public. After her initial publication in Mikhail Shemiakin's *Apollon-77,*[169] she authored several books of visual poetry in Russian and German,[170] as well as many individual pieces of visual poetry. Netzkowa also actively participates in many exhibitions and forums of visual and experimental poetry. The important thing that distinguishes her from other Russian visual poets is the nature of her professional training, which apparently influences her creativity. Netzkowa received her education at the Philological Faculty of the Moscow State University (which she did not finish) and the Moscow Conservatory, where she completed her studies of piano and music theory in 1953. Although, she is not the only contemporary Russian avant-garde poet who "has a close affinity with music and who uses quasi-musical forms as structures in her poetry,"[171] she is unquestionably the most remarkable representative of polyartistic trends in visual poetry. Netzkowa's innovative poetic strategies undoubtedly require a serious and detailed study which cannot be attempted within the format of the present work. However, a brief insight into the poet's unique manner of visual writing and a synoptic overview of her most characteristic techniques is imperative for the comprehension of the stylistic diversity of visual poetry in Russian being composed today.

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[169] "Osen v lazarete nevinnykh sester. Rekviem v semi stikhakh." Chemiakine, Michel, ed. *Apollon-77: Almanach* (Paris: Michel Chemiakine, 1977), 173-80. The analysis of this work is given in Gerald Janecek's "Paronomastic and Musical Techniques in Mnacakanova's '"Rekviem,'" *Slavic and East European Journal,* 31:2 (1987): 202-219.

[170] "Shagi i vzdokhi." Wiener Slavicticher Almanach Sonderband 6 (1982); *U smerti v gostiakh* (Vienna: n.p., 1982); *Das Buch Sabeth* (Vienna: Selbstverlag, 1988); *Metamorphosen: 20 Veränderungen einer vierzeiligen Strophe und Finale* (Vienna: n. p., 1988); *Das Hohelied* (Vienna: n. p., 1990); *Vita Breve: Iz piati knig izbrannaia lirika, 1965-1994* (Perm: Izdatelstvo Permskogo universiteta, 1994).

[171] Janecek, Gerald. "Paronomastic and Musical Techniques in Mnacakanova's 'Rekviem,'" *Slavic and East European Journal,* 31:2 (1987), 202.

As a rule, Netzkowa's visual poems consists of individual panels which are united thematically and stylistically in poetic cycles or books to be read as books and not as collections of separate lyrics. Netzkowa's works are predominantly focused on such essential subjects as love, suffering, and death. In his excellent article on Netzkowa's important poetic composition, "Osen v lazarete nevinnykh sester" ("Autumn in the Lazaretto of Innocent Sisters"), Gerald Janecek thoroughly discusses two important facets of the author's manner: the use of quasi-musical structures and paronomastic technique,[172] which apparently reveal themselves is many works by the poet. Netzkowa successfully adjusted several musical forms to her poetic experiments, namely a laude, a monophonic song or hymn of praise and devotion (Part 1 of *Das Buch Sabeth*), a passacaglia, a continuous variation based on clearly distinguishable repetition of the bass melody which may occasionally be transferred to an upper voice[173] (Part 5 of *Das Buch Sabeth*), a romance (*U smerti v gostiakh – Visiting Death*), a requiem, a polyphonic composition of the Mass for the dead ("Osen v lazarete nevinnykh sester"), and a fugue, a contrapuntal composition for particular number of vocal or instrumental voices[174] (Part 7 of her Requiem "Osen v lazarete nevinnykh sester"). Besides modelling a poetic technique that makes use of analogies with musical compositions, Netzkowa attempts to apply a wide range of stylistic devices of music, such as repetition, variation, augmentation, diminution, alteration of expositions and episodes, key changes, alteration or embellishment of the initial rhythm, melody and harmony etc., to her poetic practice on the discursive and, whenever possible, on the visual plane as well. As Janecek argues, on the verbal plane this approach to the material results in paronomastic effects on the phonetic, morphological, and semantic levels. As he further suggests,

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[172] Janecek, 202.

[173] See: Apel, Willi., ed. *Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969), 141.

[174] See: Kennedy, Michael, ed. *The Oxford Dictionary of Music* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 267.

> the semantic level can be further subdivided into relationship based on metaphor and metonymy. Variations on the phonetic and morphological levels would correspond fairly closely to musical practice in providing brief sonic motifs that can be developed, but the semantic level opens up nearly infinite possibilities. On poetry of this sort, surprising and unanticipated effects are easily produced by sudden shifts from one level to another and the development of associations on the new level.[175]

The technique of breaking words down syllabically into minimal semantic units is not new; among contemporary poets it is utilized, for instance, by Aleksandr Gornon, specifically in his lettristic compositions. For Netzkowa, however, this technique serves as a starting point for further structural and semantic transformations, each to be followed by a varying number of modified meaningful units or variations, which apparently parallels the technique of variation on a theme in music. As Sergei Biriukov argues,

> Mnatsakanova writes by words, but these words are extracted from music, are protracted through music, and therefore sometimes they are unrecognizable, and therefore we see the influx of the same words (although in reality they are different!).[176]

A similar approach to words can be found in some of Khlebnikov's poems, although the Russian Futurist was more concerned with presenting different words as graphically and semantically kindred. A brief example from her *Das Buch Sabeth,* a love story dedicated to two people who could have loved each other if it had not been for their cruel and tragic time (and thus the title alludes to the books of the prophets from the Old Testament) will, probably, elucidate this creative principle. In Part 5 entitled "Das Hohelied" ("The Song of Songs") the syllabically written phrase *My pre kra sny* ("We are beautiful"), which suggests an intertextual relationship with Biblical verses, undergoes a process of transformation by applied substraction and recombination of the first and the last units to emerge into semantically different word combinations *my sny,* meaning "we are dreams" and *krasny* ("red") (Fig. 123). Variations on the same theme, being shown on different levels, may also be of different length, ranging from several syllables or words to several pages of text, thus creating the effect of ceaseless movement, a kind of "perpetuum mobile."[177]

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[175] Janecek, Gerald. "Paronomastic and Musical Techniques in Mnacakanova's 'Rekviem,'" 204.

[176] Biriukov, Sergei. "Zrimoe zvuchanie," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 16 (1995): 287.

In general, the texture of many Netzkowa's poems resembles that of musical compositions, which, like woven fabric comprise horizontal and vertical elements, that is to say, a "woof" and "warp."[178] The succession of key words and phrases may be represented as the melody or the horizontal element of musical texture. Used flexibly and repeatedly with modifications in rhythms and intervals in various syntagmatic relationships within the stanza or more extended fragment of the verbal discourse, these phrases convey 'representative themes.' Other words and phrases function as the harmony which represents the chordal or vertical structure of a musical composition, and form an adequate semantic background for the leitmotif. The boundaries between the two categories, however, are flexible, and the word may be transferred from one group to another within the framework of the same part. Various literary devices, including that of paronomasia, are employed in both melodious and harmonious aspects. The rhythm of individual stanzas or other structural units of Netzkowa's poems also presents a special interest inasmuch as it often resembles that of syncopated rhythms with a characteristic displacement of the usual rhythmical accent (which conventionally stresses the first beat of each bar) away from a strong beat onto a weak one, therefore creating the effect of an irregular if not irritable pulse. In the fragment from Netzkowa book *Metamorfozy (Metamorphosis),* presented below, the stress is placed on the intentionally repeated and therefore semantically marked units: *son* ("dream"), *snitsia* ("dreams itself"), *poroi* (an instance of lexical paronomasia, when the context provides two meanings for words similar in sound: "sometimes" and "a certain period of time" used in the text in the instrumental case), as well as on contrastive attributes which modify the noun *son* ("dream"): *grozovoi* ("thundercloud") and *svetlyi* ("bright"). Each of these attributes is further intensified by other adjectives belonging to two different semantic groups: *prokliatyi* ("damned"),

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[177] Letter of Elisabeth Netzkowa to Gerald Janecek of May 12, 1997, 5.

[178] Apel, Willi, ed. *Harvard Dictionary of Music,* 842.

*poslednii* ("the last"), *smertelnyi* ("mortal"), *posmertnyi* ("posthumous") vs. *vesennii* ("vernal"), all applied to the same noun *son* ("dream"). The image created by verbal means is perceived as conflicting if not ambiguous. The resulting discordance between melodic and harmonic aspects, frequent key changes, as well as the inconsistent rhythmical pattern of the piece, intensifies the impression of anxiety, discrepancy, and obscurity.

| | |
|---|---|
| vse snitsia veselitsia | dreams itself amuses itself |
| son | a/the dream |
| prokliatyi prokliatyi | damned damned |
| son | dream |
| grozovoi | thundercloud |
| chto budto | which is as if |
| pod goroi | at the bottom of the hill |
| poroi | sometimes |
| budto poroi | as if sometimes |
| nebesnoiu | of heavenly |
| poroi | time |
| vse snitsia | dreams itself |
| son | the dream |
| poslednii | the last |
| smertelnyi | mortal |
| svetlyi | bright/light |
| grozovoi | thundercloud |
| vot bydto by | as if |
| alpiiskoiu poroi | in the alpine time |
| akh snitsia snitsia | ah dreams itself dreams itself |
| vse odno i to zhe | the same everytime |
| veselitsia | amuses itself |
| vot son | this is the dream |
| chto budto by | as though |
| poroi | in the time |
| alpiiskoiu nochnoi | in the alpine nocturn |
| grozovoi | thundercloud |
| vesennii son | vernal dream |
| vse snitsia snitsia | dreams itself dreams itself |
| son | dream |
| posmertnyi | posthumous |
| svetlyi | bright/light |
| snezhnyi | snowy |
| grozovoi | thundercloud |

This fragment is a homophonic piece with one melodic line and other parts acting as accompaniment. However, Netzkowa also succeeds in creating pieces with polyphonic texture, the most impressive example being *Osen v lazarete nevinnykh sester*, in which several simultaneous voices are combined contrapuntally.

Visual dimensions of the discourse influence to a great extent our perception of any poetic text, inasmuch as typography becomes a certain means of expressing sensibility. In the case of visual poetry, however, the typographical decisions acquire a special importance. As M. E. Solt argues,

> no matter how enthusiastic the poet may allow himself to become about the potential for positive influence in the world of the new visual poem, when he gets down to practicalities, he is confronted with certain problems inherent in his materials. If he is going to find the poetry in the visual dimensions of words, he must learn to handle them typographically. [179]

In this regard, typography and visual design Netzkowa's work present rich material for analysis. In his article "Paronomastic and Musical Techniques in Mnacakanova's 'Rekviem,'"Gerald Janecek specifically analyses the general make-up and some typographical decisions as related to the semantics of the most impressive part 7 of the poet's "Requiem."[180] In her other visual works Netzkowa demonstrates the same ability for adapting typographical design to a particular semantic context. Capitalization, letter and line spacing, change of letter size and type style as well as the semantic use of space are widely utilized throughout the poet's works. Netzkowa exercises the most typographic (and thus semantic) freedom and individuality, however, in her works which contain her calligraphic hand-writing. Three works of Netzkowa's creative output, namely, her poem *U smerti v gostiakh,* a short meditative story *"Aleksei Mikhailovich russkikh snovidenii"*[181] *("Aleksei Mikhailovich of Russian dreams")* and part 5 of her *Das Buch Sabeth* (published as an individual book) are hand-written instead of or in addition to being typeset, which obviously give them a "tone of pronounced intimacy."[182] As the author admits, calligraphy has always had a special appeal for her. As a child, Elizabeth Netzkowa preferred drawing letters to other typical children's activities. Probably, her continuous interest in calligraphy stemmed from her father's gift of writing calligraphically. As she recollects in her letter, besides having excellent handwriting, her father was in the habit of "writing" letters in the air with his hand. Even on his deathbed, Arkadii Mnatsakanov, already unable to speak, kept writing on his blanket. Although her father was a medical doctor, Netzkowa remembers him translating Latin poets and Ovid, the author of *Metamorphoses*, in particular, into French. Later, while commencing her own *Metamorphosen,* Netzkowa felt the book should be dedicated to her father, although it is formally dedicated to Susi Macht, who did its computer type-setting.[183] Being an essential integral element of Netzkowa's visual poetry, calligraphic hand-writing performs multiple functions in her creative output: aesthetic, expressive, technical, ideographical, etc. Thus, in *U smerti v gostiakh* ( *Visiting Death*) besides using letters as structural units for horizontally and vertically arranged calligraphic patterns, Netzkowa persistently reiterates the capital *E* (the initial letter of her first name) on every page with text, thus indicating a highly subjective treatment of the narrative situation (Fig. 124). This device is further developed in Netzkowa's typeset book *Metamorphosen*, published two years later, in which in addition to the initial *E,* the whole name "Elisabeth" is interwoven in the repetitive ornamental calligraphic pattern. *U smeti v gostiakh* is the "book of non-existence," of death, or, more precisely, of dying. The cause of death is not associated directly with illness or any other feasible reason. In fact, there is no justification mentioned. It is the stifling atmosphere of life itself that gradually smothers the poet locked in a "black burial vault of ants, black mortal burial vault, black hellish burial vault" and surrounded by "rats of death." Netzkowa created her work in the 1970s, the period of stagnation and revived Stalinist abuses and state persecution of artists and intellectuals. In her letter to Gerald Janecek she writes that at that time she felt as if she lived at the bottom on the pit in complete darkness and airlessness without any hope of salvation. She felt as if she were visiting death, and thus her reality was that of the other world. Naturally, she saw everything in black tones – her death, her existence in Moscow, her environment, and everything around her. In the silence and solitude of the late nights she committed her feelings to paper, composing brief poems, which reflected various aspects of her intense emotional and spiritual experience. In her unendurable agony of death, Netzkowa wrote the book for herself in her own poetic voice and never thought that it could be published or publicized. At the same time, she was also writing her requiem, "Osen v lazarete nevinnykh sester." She lived only because she felt herself responsible for her son and her books. They had to be protected against death.[184] There was nobody but her to discharge the mission. She survived; so did her books.

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[179] Salt, Mary Ellen. *Concrete Poetry: A World View*, 61.

[180] See: Janecek, Gerald. "Paronomastic and Musical Techniques in Mnacakanova's"Rekviem," 213-217.

[181] Netzkowa, Elisabeth. "Aleksei Mikhailovich russkikh snovidenii. Kratkaia povest v slovakh, i v slezakh, v poklonakh, i vzdokhakh." Kuzminsky, Konstantin K., and Kovalev, Gregory L. *The Blue Lagoon Anthology of Modern Russian Poetry*. Vol. 2A, 19-32.

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[182] O'Grady, Holly. "Sperry: A Verbal/Visual Novel" *Visual Literature Criticism*. Kostelanetz, Richard, ed. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), 157.

[183] Letter to the author of March 5, 1998, 2.

*U smerti v gostiakh* verbally and graphically enhances the author's tragic perception of the deathly reality of the time. Therefore, all elements of the book are written or drawn in black, and this colour-scheme is undoubtedly associated with the motif of death and mourning, introduced by verbal, pictorial, and calligraphic means. Each page has wide black margins, thus being turned into a mourning frame. The second part of the book entitled "Proshchai" ("Farewell") is introduced by panel 22, which reads as: *Rasskazat – dazhe / ne poverite ne poverite rasskazat / dazhe / ne poverite dazhe / i / ne poverite: kak / zhila-byla provozhala / pozhivala / v chernom vertepe muravinom / v chernom sklepe smertelnom / beimtodebamtodedezugazt / v chernom chertovom sklepe skeletnom / beimtodezugast / u . . . v gostiakhvgostiakhvgostiakh / u skeletnoi v gostiakh v sklepe / SMERTI / beimtodebgostiakh* ("Even if I tell / you never believe tell you / even if / never believe even if / and / never believe: how / I lived saw off / lived / in the black burial vault of ants / in the black mortal burial vault /.... / in the black hellish burial vault of skeletons/ ...../ in . . . visiting death visiting death visiting death / at her skeletal death in her burial vault DEATH visiting / visiting") and is followed by shadowy outlines of hands and completely black panels with slightly recognized frame for non-existent text. This creates the illusion that words are not powerful enough to express sufferings to the fullest; only complete darkness is able to communicate this message of despair and grief. Many discursive and some purely illustrative pages of the book are framed by elegant calligraphic patterns remarkable for their obsessive recurrence in the movements of the poem. The calligraphy of the book is astoundingly regular, as if the writing has been produced by a machine and not by a human hand (Fig. 125), which intensifies the general mortal sensation. According to the author, this is a calligraphy of the order of eternal rest, a calligraphy and architecture of the death which moves the artist's hand,[185] inasmuch as death is the main driver of the book and the poet's inevitable destination. As Netzkowa confesses, she tried later to reproduce this type of calligraphy but never succeeded. Only in the most gloomy days of her Muscovite existence did she manage to write her "black book about black death"[186] in such a terrifying superhuman precision and regularity of black calligraphic lines which reveals the inanimate and mechanistic convulsions of death sending its message from the kingdom of shades rather than an exposure of individual human creativity.

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[184] Letter of Elisabeth Netzkowa to Gerald Janecek of May 12, 1997, 2-3.

Besides calligraphy and textual pieces the poetic medium of Netzkowa's work includes purely visual compositions. Blurred or black shapes of woman's hands, or precisely, shadows of hands wearing rings and bracelets, holding a pen, or locked, or gesticulating are abundant in the work. Shaped hands are convulsive, as if cramped by death, the presence of which is physically discernible. Interestingly, shadowy outlines of female hands are also present in another Netzkowa's work of sufferings and unendurable pain, namely, "Aleksei Mikhailovich russkikh snovidenii" ("Aleksei Mikhailovich of Russian dreams"). The latter was inspired by the tragic fate of the prominent Russian writer and thinker Aleksei Remizov and that of Amadeus Mozart in the broader philosophical context of lifetime humilation and the posthumous recognition of talent. In the work "U smerti v gostiakh" several pictorial compositions of hands also resemble wings, thus alluding to the motif of the poet's ascending to heaven that form the finale of the poem. The final pages of the book are interwoven with calligraphic patterns, which create the illusion of the poet's words being gradually forced out by the mortal characters of death. The page with the final word "Proshchai" ("Farewell") is designed as a crêpe band (Fig. 126) and is followed by several pages of nondiscursive calligraphic patterns. There is no text any more, no poetic voice, just the mechanistic calligraphy of death.

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[185] Letter of Elisabeth Netzkowa to Gerald Janecek of May 12, 1997, 3.

[186] Letter of Elisabeth Netzkowa, 3.

All three media of expressiveness employed by the author lead the reader through the unbearable sufferings of the poet to the point of recognition that physical death is the only possible way of deliverance and salvation. The theme of pain and suffering, so noticeable and visible in the book, however, is not elaborated on the discursive level directly, but skilfully expressed through pictorial images of spasmodic hands. The combination of the text, calligraphy, color and pictorial effects create an extremely powerful image, unattainable by either the medium used exclusively.

Another hand-written composition by Netzkowa, namely, the most powerful part "Das Hohelied" (also published as an individual book) of her *Das Buch Sabeth,*" besides employing various styles of calligraphy is lavishly adorned with multicolored pictures which are an integral part of the work (rather than illustrations to the discourse) and are predominantly done in a bright blue colour which the poet characterizes as "astral blue."[187] Unlike the canonic text of "The Song of Songs," "Das Hohelied," besides the central theme of love as a ceaseless driver of life, also introduces the motif of death, grief, suffering and later that of farewell. Nonetheless, the book is perceived as a hymn to love, or a "book of permanent love."[188] In the flux of the poem sad and sorrowful verses are balanced by abstract visual compositions with repetitive blue accents suggesting eternity and hope. Neither the suffering nor the death of an individual can stop a powerful and everlasting movement of life whose motive force is love. This is clearly expressed on the visual level and finalized on both verbal and visual planes in the refrain *Nas prodolzhaet liubov – Liubov prodolzhaetsia* ("Love makes us continue" – Love continues").

Netzkowa's typeset books are also remarkable for their unconventional layout and other means of visualization. She frequently resorts to column structure, which suggests the accentuation of each word as if in recitation, or arranges two or more columns of poetic text on the page. Many of her poetic texts are in fact pattern poems of various designs and configurations. The visual and verbal polyphony of the culminative part of the poet's requiem "Osen v lazarete nevinnykh sester," "Resurgam," has received a thorough treatment by Gerald

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[187] Letter of March 5, 1998.

[188] Netzkowa, Elizabeth. *Das Hoheleid,* n. pag.

Janecek.[189] It would be relevant, however, to draw attention to the very last page of the composition finalized by the pattern verse which is shaped as a cross (Fig. 127) and probably alludes, as Janecek suggests, to the Baroque figure poems.[190] Besides, the individually designed layout of her pages or visual panels, Netzkowa uses another "personal touch" in her style, namely, calligraphic ornamentation. Her texts, whether hand-written or typeset, are often ornamented by calligraphic elements with the repeatedly used initial of the author's first name. As has been mentioned, in *Metamorfozy* the whole name of the poet is incorporated in the quaint calligraphic design which appears at the top of the page.

Netzkowa's treatment of space often creates an illusion of graphical representation of aural phenomena. Thus, the words to be pronounced slowly and with emphasis are spaced out, to add emphasis:

| | |
|---|---|
| chernaia pechal | a black grief |
| i pyl | and dust |
| i smertnaia pechal | and mortal grief |
| v pridele ioanna | in john's side-altar[191] |

Unconventionally used orthographic marks, for instance, the succession of hyphens between the syllables of the word and the exclamatory mark, are also employed to enhance the most dramatic fragments of the text. The prolonged pauses in Netzkowa's compositions are concretized by blank spaces, and thus, the aural effect of a pause (the absence of sound) is visualized. As Iu. Orlitskii reports, unconventionally expansive word spaces in the line emphasize specific density and drawl characteristic of the poetic text in contrast to the discourse of prose.[192] Netzkowa's spacial organization of her text gives numerous examples of her emphatic approach to line and word arrangement. She often organizes words in a step-ladder manner, or leaves one word in the middle of the line, or arranges words to be read in a diagonal manner rather than from left to right. Less frequently, she fuses several words in one without leaving space between them. Her hand-written books employ a variety of letter sizes, and calligraphic styles, inasmuch as lettering in Netzkowa's works never seeks a uniform consistency. The letters of Netzkowa's poems often have relevant additions to letterforms and thus may be characterized as "ornamented letters," according to Peter Mayer's classification.[193]

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[189] Janecek, Gerald. "Paronomastic and Musical Techniques in Mnacakanova's 'Rekviem,'" 213-217.

[190] Janecek, 215.

[191] Netzkowa, Elizabeth. *Metamorphozy,* 6.

[192] Orlitskii, Iuri. "Vizualnyi komponent v sovremennoi russkoi poezii," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 16 (1995), 185.

Each composition or individual work by Netzkowa employs different sets of stylistic devices, although many of them are developed and constantly reused by the author, which makes Netzkowa's individual poetic style very recognizable. Besides the persistent exploration of the death or love themes as well as other motifs related to them, the poet widely employs polyartistic technique by mixing visual and verbal elements with calligraphy and hand-writing in sequential formations, imitative passages, and modified restatements, organized on the analogy of the musical variation on a theme. In addition to typical paronomastic effects on syntactical, morphological and phonetic levels, the integral discursive fragments are repeated in enlarged or reduced visual dimensions, some of them several times, or presented as partially overlapped by pictorial forms (Fig. 128), as occurs in *U smerti v gostiakh*. Different typefaces, shifts in type size, and other elements of typographic design are reiterated consistently in various sequences and modifications as well. The components of Netzkowa's works seem to be reflexive and spontaneous but in fact all developments and movements in Netzkowa's visual-poetic symphonies are deliberately organized. Even those works of the poet which, in a strict sense, are not polyphonic, inasmuch as they consist of a single theme, are still perceived as complex compositions with the extensive and well-designed interaction of the textual plane with the visual and graphic. In this regard the poetic experimentations of Netzkowa, as well as the impressive results of her creative endeavour, put her in a unique position in the contemporary Russian avant-garde, and visual poetry in particular.

No less remarkable in originality is Valeri Scherstjanoi, another Russian expatriate poet and performer, who moved to Germany (at that time German Democratic Republic) in 1981. Scherstjanoi notably contributes to both visual and sound poetry. Most of his works are intended for simultaneous audio, visual and spacial perception; and at his exhibitions the public is usually provided with earphones to hear the acoustic component of his multimedia compositions. As a visual and sound poet, Scherstjanoi deliberately develops "synaesthetical" principles of creativity which are understood as a harmonizing synthesis of different aesthetic concepts and cultural approaches. To a great extent the output of Scherstjanoi should be considered a cross-cultural phenomenon, inasmuch as his creativity stems from the poetic traditions of Russian Cubo-Futurists but is seriously influenced by Carlfriedrich Claus's far-reaching study of the relationship between music and language, and by German concrete poetry. After the poet's immigration to the West, his literary works acquired new perspective and flavour through the adoption of German culture (which is not strictly confined to national boundaries and includes the whole German/Austrian/Swiss component[194]) and the German language. The latter Scherstjanoi uses along with Russian for his creative activities.

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[193] Mayer, Peter. "Some Remarks Concerning the Classification of the Visual in Literature," *Dada/Surrealism* 12 (1993): 9.

The objectives of the present study prevents us from focusing on sound poetry, which comprises an important part of Scherstjanoi's creative output. The musical component, however, has become an integral element of Scherstjanoi's pictorial works, and this requires a brief analysis in the context of the present discussion. It is worth mentioning that in the narrative supplement to his poetical collection *Ars Scribendi: Non Finito*[195] the poet admits his long-lasting preoccupation with writing understood as a spatial or multidimensional entity. The process of writing letters (or more precisely, creating lettristic compositions) has always had much more appeal for him than the completion of a written work, inasmuch as in his opinion any completion means the death of the creation. For that reason the compositions, gathered in *Ars Scribendi* are claimed to be unfinished and therefore alive. However, according to the poet, if the completed text is recorded on tape, it is protected from dying by its dynamic qualities. As far as its scriptural aspect is concerned, it is preserved in the poet's imagination.[196]

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[194] Gumpel, Liselotte. *"Concrete" Poetry From East and West Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 36.

[195] Scherstjanoi, Valeri. *Ars Scribendi: Non finito* (Berlin: Druckhaus Brandenburg GmbH, 1993).

[196] Scherstjanoi, Valeri. *Dopolnenie k Ars Scribendi.* (Berlin: n. p., 1995), 2-3.

When it comes to actual poetic communication, Scherstjanoi creates specific graphic constituents called "scribentisms," functioning like notes in a musical notation on special panels which are often referred to as score sheets.[197] These constituents are apparently derived from conventional graphic signs which have undergone a drastic graphical transformation that has resulted in a loosening of their original semantic denotation and the acquisition of new meaning and function. Installations of accumulated and overlapped "scribentisms" are unable to communicate the message, originally transmitted by their prototypes. However, this does not mean that they are deprived of any communicative function. Technically speaking, "scribentisms" do not produce a text if the latter is understood as "a piece of spoken or written language."[198] Moreover, their articulative capacities vary from piece to piece, ranging from works with loose or arbitrary semantics to pieces with determined meaning within the framework of the graphically or pictorially established parameters.

In the composition entitled "Two on the Waves of Love"[199] (Fig. 129), the peripeteia of love is narrated by means of portmanteau "scribentisms" derived from the contamination of the stylized figure "2" and the common graphic symbol of a wave. The narrative monotony of the first four double lines, each consisting of the sequences of reversing pictorial mirrors (semantically and graphically paired), which obviously symbolises the untroubled harmonious relationship, are in sharp contrast to the dynamic linear rhythm of the culminative fifth line. The latter suggests a conflict, followed by the crisis of relationship and the dramatic dénouement of breaking-up. The last two images of the visual row, two hearts, are perceived as separated by distance in accordance with the linear perspective; and the fact that the "abandoned" heart comprises two question marks apparently strengthens the dramatic effect of this finale. The narrative medium of Scherstjanoi's composition, realised through a series of pictorial situations is highly discernible and comprehensible, although the only access to meaning is the material base of the work, obviously lacking in textual meaning. The non-textual

[197] *Werkstatt Moskau II: Einblicke: Malerei, Grafik, Plastik, Installationen* (Berlin: Akademie der Künste, 1995), 40.

[198] Richard, Jack C.; Platt, John; Platt, Heidi. *Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics,* 378.

[199] Scherstjanoi, Valeri, *Ars Scribendi: Non finito,* n. pag.

nature of the work, however, does not prevent the reader from developing an accurate interpretation of the events schematically outlined. The title of the work, of course, is of some help for interpretative purpose. The meaning of the message, however, seems to be clear enough without additional comments, inscriptions or other formal guiding devices. Interestingly, the verbal discourse with its analogous characteristics would almost inevitably impose a strict control over the reader's fantasy, thus preventing him from bringing his own facilities into the game of imagination. However, because the discourse is communicated through flexible polysemantic "scribentisms," this is not the case. It is up to the reader to improvise and construct a general frame for the story with details provided by his own imagination, which could be stimulated by the sonoric level of the work, where the "scribentisms" are typically associated with delicate rustles, clamours and other sound nuances.

The composition, "Two on the Waves of Love," has a relatively narrow spectrum of hypothetical meanings within the established semantic framework. Another work by the same author, "We" (Fig. 130),[200] which represents the fusion of the two semantic logograms, identifying male and female characters, can acquire a wide range of possible denotations, from the narrow erotic one to the wider philosophical concept of the complementary principles of masculinity and femininity, which maintains the harmony of the universe.

Like Netzkowa and Scherstjanoi Vilen Barsky has a well-established reputation as an experimental poet and artist. Born in Kyiv, Barsky received his professional training as a painter and graphic artist at the Kyiv State Institute of Arts, and later was elected a member of the prestigious Union of Artists of Ukraine. Although Barsky exhibited his works at local, national and international shows and participated in other projects sponsored by the Union of Artists, his creative activity did not receive much support from the state, nor did his experimental poetry, which Barsky began writing in the late 1950s without the intention of publishing it in the Soviet Union. His first visual compositions were produced in the manner of Western concretism, which was most likely unknown to him at that time. Nonetheless, Barsky continued his search for visual and sonoric concretism of individual letters, syllables and words until his emigration to Germany and up to this day. As he admits, it was during 1976 when visual experimentation finally found its way into his creative career.[201] Whereas Barsky had resided in Kyiv from his birth until his emigration to Germany in 1981 (with an exception of several years spent in evacuation during the Second World war), Ukrainian has never been his native language, and practically all his poetic output has been produced in Russian.[202] From the beginning of his emigrant experience, Vilen Barsky, like many other Russian émigré poets, has actively participated in cultural activities in the West, publishing and exhibiting his works. In recent years the geography of his cultural ventures has been extended to Eastern Europe, embracing both Russia and Ukraine. His visual poetry has been well received by Western and Russian critics, and his works are published and reviewed in scholarly publications.[203]

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[200] Scherstjanoi, n. pag.

As a visual poet, Barsky is primarily concerned with asyntactic structures which still preserve morphemic and phonetic characteristics. Most of his works incorporate just a few words, primarily of a nominative nature, and this minimalistic approach to the language entails the iconicity of linguistic signs, which, in accordance with Charles Pierce's theory of signs are predominantly symbols representing their objects through linguistic conventions.[204] Liberated frome syntactical determinism, words still preserve their semantics; however, it is their visual or iconic qualities which are significantly intensified. In linguistically minimal asyntactic structures, individual words attract the reader's attention more as self-sufficient entities than depersonified links in a structured symantic chain. Asyntactic word clusters communicating reduced or concentrated verbal messages can be compared to diagrams of actual reality, or, at least, of its most important aspects. In this sense Barsky's experimentation is very close to the principles of concretism, especially to Gomringer's "one-word-concepts,"[205] as well as to his belief that the aim of concrete or visual poetry is "to give poetry an organic function in society again, and in doing so to restate the position of the poet in society."[206] Barsky's visual poetry is also close to concretism in another respect, that is, his approach to space. The concretization of space typically attempted by the poet, is reminiscent of the concretists' treatment of space. In his composition "Sverkhu, sprava, snizy, sleva, mezhdu" ("Above, To the Right, Below, To the Left, Between", fig. 131) Barsky relies on a square form (which is typically referred to as an expression of the two dimensions that constitute a surface, and thus is associated with realization or materialization[207]) as a framing device to organize the open space and the constituents of the composition. On the symbolical level the square commonly stands for firmness and stability and in such capacity is often used for conveying messages of organization and construction.[208] It also implies the concept of dual symmetry, which is also not alien to Barsky's composition. All four constituents, which form the framing structure, are adverbs characterizing some spatial relations. All of them begin with the Russian letter *s*. This type of structural symmetry is visually and linguistically emphasized by the identical endings of the words which are opposing and parallel. In addition, the opposition *sverkhu* : *snizu* ("above" : "below") also suggests the concepts of Oneness of the Whole, understood as consistent rather than chaotic patterns of Nature.[209] The dramatic relations in which the constituents of the composition are involved are also continued on the typographical level.

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[201] More detailed information about Vilen Barsky and his creative endeavours is provided in the 1983 questionaire "Vilen Isakovich Barsky otvechaet na voprosy K. K. Kuzminskogo" published in: Kusminsky, Konstantin K., and Kovalev, Gregory L. *The Blue Lagoon Anthology of Modern Russian Poetry*. Vol. 3B (1986), 236-248.

[202] A visual poem in Ukrainian written by Barsky in 1976 is analysed in the third chapter, devoted to the contemporary visual poetry in Ukrainian.

[203] See: Sergei Biriukov. *Zevgma: russkaia poeziia ot manerizma do postmodernizma,* 180; Igor Loshchilov "Opyt interpretatsii vizualnogo teksta," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 16 (1995): 264-271.

[204] Pierce, Charles S. *Collected Papers.* V. 2. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932), 157-58.

Although Barsky uses the same typefaces for the framing and central elements of the compositon, he deliberately changes the letter size. Four framing words are written in enlarged letters as compared to the word *mezhdu* ("between" or "among") in the centre of the square.

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[205] Gomringer, Eugene. *worte sind schatten: die konstellationen, 1951-1968* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohtl, 1969), 277.

[206] Comringer, Eugene. "From Line to Constellation." Tr. Mike Weaver. Solt, Mary Ellen. *Concrete Poetry: A World View, 67.*

[207] Liungman, Carl G. *Dictionary of Symbols* (New York; London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1991), 309.

[208] Cirlot, J.E. *A Dictionary of Symbols* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1962), 287.

[209] Chetwynd, Tom. *Dictionary of Symbols* (London: Thirsins, 1998), 2.

This choice of the letter size disturbs the visual equilibrium between the constituents of the work. The central element is perceived as isolated (almost to the point of imprisonment) and physically suppressed by the oversized framing constituents, which apparently impose their spatial and dimensional power over their less fortunate companion. Such an unenviable position, however, is totally justified by the linguistic denotation of the central element, which implies some spatial or physical constraint and susceptibility to territorial encroachments. As far as semantics is concerned, an adverb of spatiality *mezhdu* indicates the lack of individual open space. On the representational level of Barsky's composition, the central constituent is fenced in on four sides. In addition, the actual size of the central word seems to be unproportionally small given the availability of the blank space around the word *mezhdu*, as if the latter has deliberately shrunk to avoid contact with the well organized rigid structure of the square frame.

The composition "Noch utro"[210] ("Night Morning," fig. 132) is a cyclic poem in both its verbal and pictorial aspects. Shaped as a stylized circle, it also has multiple entrances to the text, which can be read from top-to bottom, bottom-to-top, as well as a clockwise and counterclockwise manner without undergoing serious semantic deformation. Crowned by the binary opposition with a repeated member *noch – noch – utro* ("night – night – morning"), which indicates transition from one state to another, the work is finalized by the same opposition, although slightly altered: *noch – utro– utro* or in the reverse reading, *utro –utro– noch*, thus symboling the closure of the circle. Although the actual recurring period of time indicated in the poem covers a comparatively short interval, most likely the sequence of a single day and night, it can be applied to a longer temporal interval as well. The middle part of the word, consisting of paired semantic matches arranged along the vertical axis, reads as:

| | |
|---|---|
| tree | silence |
| bird | singing |
| sky | light |
| man | prayer, |

The very last pair, "man – prayer" brings a religious touch to the basically pagan concept of the cyclical order of Life and the Universe. The same verbal constituent strongly suggests the straight forward and immediate reverse reading of the text, inasmuch as in many cultures a day should begin and end with a prayer. Another interesting feature of the verbal aspect of the composition is the choice of the vocabulary itself. All the notions of the discourse are associated with some spiritual values, whether encompassing the spirituality of a human being ("man – prayer"), commonly expressed by religion or that of Nature, characteristic of animistic paganism and pantheistic beliefs. Other values, equally important in human life but still incorporating a shade of vanity, are not mentioned at all. Therefore, the mood of pacification and conciliation is very strong in the poem. Another work along this line which should be mentioned is a rhombus-shaped composition "Angel"[211] (Fig. 133) which also focuses on the spiritual or religious issues as far as its content is concerned. However, the text mirrored alongside its horizontal axis suggests the form of the verbal palindrome in which only the word order is reversed.

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[210] Barsky, Vilen. *Wörta: Experimentelle texte.* (Siegen: n.p., 1983), n. pag.

"Nezzhataia polosa"[212] ("An Unharvested Strip," fig. 134) by the same author is an inventive attempt at experimentation with intertextuality on the visual level. The title of the work immediately reminds any Russian reader of a well-known namesake poem by Nikolai Nekrasov, a popular nineteenth-century poet. The prototypical text, like many of Nekrasov's poems elaborates the subject of the suffering of unfortunate and miserable Russian peasants, deprived of many human rights. More specifically, the work deals with the dramatic situation of the peasant family, whose bread-winner did not harvest his crop because of his illness. Given that Russian peasants commonly had no resources other than the product of their own labour, the poem is full of tragic overtones. Barsky's visual composition is unquestionably based on Nekrasov's poetic statemenet, and the name of Nekrasov is placed above its title. Moreover, Barsky's work literally duplicates t Nekrasov'ext, although 29 lines out of 30 have been cropped before appearing on the page. As an iconic sign, the cropped text of the poem is reminiscent of a field after harvesting. The sole clearly discernable line reads as *Tolko nezzhata*

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[211] Kuzminsky, Konstantin K., and Kovalev, Gregory L. *The Blue Lagoon Anthology of Modern Russian Poetry.* Vol. 3B, (1986), 250.

[212] *Dekorativnoe iskusstvo,* 9/10 (1991), 8.

*poloska odna...* ("Only one strip is unharvested..."), which obviously stands for such a strip on the pictorial level of the composition as well as for a visual metaphor of the quoted line of poetry. However, all other poetic images and overtones of Nekrasov's discourse are missing in the visual intertext, and the reader unfamiliar with the prototypic poem would never presume its tragic pathos. Consequently, Michael Riffaterre's claim that the text and intertext are homologous[213] is not applicable to the relationship obtaining between the given text and the result of its visual transformation. Nor does the former control the decipherment of the latter, at least to the extent which is commonly observed when conventional poetic or narrative discourses are intertextually linked. The considerable distance between the two texts is set deliberately by the author, for whom a constituted interxtext itself signifies such a distance.[214] Consequently, Barsky's work is intelligible without *a priori* knowledge of Nekrasov's poem, although familiarity with the prototypical text can facilitate the process of understanding, or make interpretation more sophisticated.

Among Barsky's poetic output there is a corpus of visual poems which visualize the semantics of their messages, whether literal or figurative. In fact, the pictorial dimensions of these works function as direct visual metaphors to their verbal counterparts. In the one-line visual poem "Odinokaia ptitsa"[215] ("A Lonely Bird," fig. 135) the metaphorical visualization occurs as a result of association of the letter *k*, withdrawn and spatially separated from the discourse, with the contour of a bird, soaring alone in the sky. In untitled composition[216] (Fig. 136) the metaphorization of the semantics is attempted through the number of lines, verbally suggested by each constituent of the text. Following this pattern, the first one, *uedinenie* ("solitude") corresponds to a sole line, while the second constituent, *udvoenie* ("doubling") is structurally repeated, and the third one *utroenie* ("tripling") is written out three times. The last constituent, *chetvertovanie* ("quartering"), which stands for the means of execution by dismembering the body of the criminal, widely practiced in the Russian empire for centuries, graphically corresponds to four stumps of the kernel word, thus finalizing the whole composition with a notion semantically opposing the logical chain of the previous constituents.

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[213] Riffaterre, Michall. "La Trace de l'intertexte." *La Penseé*, 215 (1980): 6-17.

[214] See: Igor Loshchilov, "Opyt interpretatsii vizualnogo teksta," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 16 (1995): 264.

[215] Kuzminsky, Konstantin K., and Kovalev, Gregory L. *The Blue Lagoon Anthology of Modern Russian Poetry*. Vol. 3B (1986), 256.

[216] Kuzminsky, 267.

Probably the best well-known (or at least most often published) visual composition by Vilen Barsky is "Nirvana"[217] (Fig. 137), in which the initial component *nirvana* is gradually transformed into *nichto* ("nothing") and further acquires the stylized dimensions of the swastika. The logical connection between the state of final release from the cycle of reincarnation (culminating in absolute blessedness in Buddhist teaching or in absorption into Brahman in Hinduism) with the ancient symbol, having a wide spectrum of meanings centred around power, energy, sun, life force, and migration,[218] does not seem to require any comment. However, it should be kept in mind, of course, that the swastika was officially recognized as the emblem of the Nazi party and was used on the party banner. In both Germany and Austria, and later in America (where the emblem of the swastika is altered with a circle in the centre), the swastika has appeared as an anti-Semitic symbol. Thus, a logically transparent semantic chain which unites all three constituent of the poem (*nirvana*, *nichto*, and the swastika) is complicated by the tragic symbolism of its iconic sign. The tragic connotation of the work is intensified by the awareness that its author is an ethnic Jew and therefore is a representative of the ethic minority which was ruthlessly murdered by the Nazis between 1940 and 1945.

Henri Volohonsky is better known as a poet whose poetry "ranges in styles from conversational to hieratic with mixed styles in between"[219] (published after his emigration to Israel in 1982, and later to Germany), than as a visualist. However, some of his works are meant to be seen rather than read, like the "Ballada o zhalkoi gibeli poeta Broni Brianskogo" ("Ballad about Miserable Death of the Poet Bronia Brianskii"). In fact, two version of the same ballad exist. One is in the form of the conventional poetic discourse, although rich in lexical and syntactical deviation from the standard Russian grammar, and another is a visualized variant of the same text (Fig. 138). This particular version is worth explicating in the present study. The first thing that should be mentioned is that the poetic text is not only preserved in the visual composition, but is in fact duplicated. However, the duplicated variant is fragmented by cutting off the edges of the text itself. Besides, the latter is written over another textual fragment, this one completely indiscernible. Moreover, the author also incorporates one more discursive piece, which is also fragmented, but in a different way. Many of the words of this 17 line framed piece on the right of the composition are broken into fragments by black marks which seem to have been inserted at random, thus resembling Sergei Sigei's technique of fragmentation, utilized in his *Vor okov* (*A Thief of Ferrets*). Fragmentation becomes the crucial issue of the work. Even the kernel poetic text, the ballad itself, is partially fragmented by random black marks and overlapping small black and white squares in addition to the vertically arranged white panel with the title, although the text remains within a reasonable area of communication. The author's reliance upon fragmentation as an important means of visualization can be related to the poem's content. The poem focuses on the peculiar death of the reckless Muscovite poet, Bronia Brianskii, who was crushed by an armoured train, a trite symbol of the Russian revolution, which in Volohonsky's temporally undefined poem acquires a humorous effect. Several typically Hebrew ornamentations inserted in the body of the composition most likely suggest the ethnic background of the protagonist, as well as the protagonist's first name. Being an interesting visual poem, this composition is not very typical for Volohonsky' s creative style. He commonly resorts to unconventional line and word arrangement as a primary means of visualisation. However, alongside work of other Russian émigré visualists, Volohonsky's visual ballad makes a notable contribution to the corpus of visual poetry, and, especially to its linguistically non-minimalized part. In this sense, Volohonsky's work is linked to that of Netzkowa (Austria), Gornon, and Surikov (Russian) and the American authors Ocheretyansky and Levchin.

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[217] Kuzminsky, 258.

[218] Liungman, Carl, G. *Dictionary of Symbols*, 178-79.

[219] Janecek, Gerald. "Anri Voloxonskij: Poet-Scientist." *Slavic and East European Journal* 26:4 (1982): 434.

## RUSSIAN VISUAL POETRY IN THE USA

In his *Fundamentals of Language* Roman Jakobson claims that the development of human discourse takes place along two different semantic lines, when "one topic may lead to another through their similarity" as in the metaphoric way or "through their contiguity" as in the case of metonymy or the combination of the two.[220] As he further observes, there are various motives which may "determine the choice between these alternants" in poetry; however, as poetry is focussed upon sign "the principle of similarity underlines poetry."[221] This statement, however, does not seem necessarily accurate when applied to visual poetry. Visual poetry as a presentational mode in most cases is governed by elliptical, paratactical, brachylogical and other contracted or compressed forms of diction, which involve not only syntactical erasure or omission of the linguistic elements but also recourse to morphological and even lexical erasure. When a word is lacking in spoken language, gestures or interjections may come into play. The absence of the word or more extended unit of expression in the visual poetry in most cases is compensated by various means of visualization of the poetic message. That means that the interaction between the structural elements in most cases is more complicated here than in conventional poetry. The relationships may exist within the verbal or visual sets alongside the juxtaposition of verbal and visual images. Thus in visual writing types of contiguity or similarity as well as their combination or competition may vary considerably. The visual component of the piece does not necessarily convey the same message as the verbal one, nor does obviously it replicate the same semantic mode. The poem "Kartina"[222] ("Picture," fig. 139) by the New Jersey based poet, Alex Ocheretyansky sounds like a conventional poetic piece when read aloud. In the translation from Russian the poem reads:

| | |
|---|---|
| na chernom fone | on a black background |
| kremovaia roza | the cream-coloured rose |
| roniaet kroshechnye slezy lepestki | is dropping tiny petals of tears. |

This poetic discourse thematically, but not structurally, resembles a Japanese haiku, an epigrammatic verse which contains a philosophical maxim or lyrical statement. There is no doubt that Ocheretyansky's poem is a full-fledged poetic construct rendered in an interesting poetic form. And yet it is a figure poem, in which lines are arranged to produce a pictorial contour of the rose. The solid body of the flower is composed by a series of horizontal verses whose individual lengths are varied, while the letters of the very last word *lepestki* meaning "petals" are arranged vertically to draw a plastic line of the stem. Moreover, we have also no difficulty in tracing the downward path of the falling petals symbolically represented as the vertical sequence of letters of which the noun *lepestki* consists. Thus each linguistic unit of the poem simultaneously functions as a visual sign of single or dual connotation. The verbal image, however, is not literally transmitted to the visual plane, as it seems at first sight. Visually the poem is largely metonymic, inasmuch as the pictorial dimension of the poem exploits physical or spacious proximity. On the verbal level, however, the image is built upon the substrata of metaphor. The poem ends with a metaphor *sliozy lepestki* ("petals of tears"), the meaning of which cannot be transferred to the visual dimension completely. In order to associate the tiny petals of tears with the vertically arranged letters of the final word, the reader has first to have read the poem, otherwise he will lose the allusion. Interestingly, the author stresses the visual aspect of his poem verbally by letting the reader know which materials were used for the production of his picture. The line following the title reads as *tush / bumaga / akvarel* which mean "ink / paper / watercolour," thus providing the reader with a clue for the interpretation of the poem as a visual construct.

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[220] Jacobson, Roman. *Fundamentals of Language* (Cambridge: Mouton & Co, S-Gravenhage, 1956), 76.

[221] Jacobson, 77, 81.

[222] Kuzminsky, Konstantin K. and Kovalev, Gregory, L. *The Blue Lagoon Anthology of Modern Russian Poetry,* Vol. 3B (1986), 221.

Among Russian-speaking émigré literati, the former resident of Kyiv, Alex Ocheretyansky, is well known as an experimental poet, editor (of one of the most interesting journals of visual and experimental poetry in the West, *Chernovik*) and the author of several books on the history of Russian avant-garde. His poetic output is diverse and includes experimental linguistic poetry, visual compositions, figure poems as well as philosophical verse. Most often Ocheretyasnky resorts to Russian as his working language, although his compositions are also bilingual, or written in English or Hebrew. One of his most recent visual projects deals with Jewish letters, anthropomorphized or personified in various ways, including that of photocollage. (Fig. 140-141). The poet tends to work with syntactical discourses (by these I mean texts written either in Russian or in English; however, due to unfamiliarity with Hebrew, I refrain from any comments regarding texts written in this language), even if the verbal message is very brief. Every so often Ocheretyasky plays with the typography of his messages, shifting from one typeface to another within the same phrase or deviating from the linear letter arrangement, as in his cycles "V galeree khudozhnika" ("In the Artist's Gallery") or "Listia"("Leaves"). As the author admits, the former was inspired by brief information in the article "The Second Life of Books" published in the Russian daily newspaper *Novoe Russkoe Slovo* about the ancient practice of using different materials for writing purposes. Leaves of various plants were reportedly used instead of sheets of paper. Interestingly, in Russian the words "leaf" and "sheet" are homonyms, and Ocheretyansky wittily utilizes this linguistic peculiarity for producing short lyrical or philosophic visual poems, each being shaped as a leaf, although all the poems differ in their configuration (Fig. 142-143).

In general, many visual compositions by Ocheretyasnky depend on witticism, and, in particular, his work "Stuxopuc,"[223] (this Russian word transliterated can be rendered as "writing by drawing"), which resemblesa series of cartoons. The work contains nine consecutively arranged panels and conceptually is based on the dynamic interplay of their iconicity and textuality, of which the visual gradation is reminiscent of cinematographic technique.[224] Each panel of "Stuxopuc" but the initial one fuses the textual and the iconic, thus creating a tautological message (Fig. 144 a-h) The verbal message is explicitly metaphorical as the poem describes a person's attempt to make a fresh start of his life by cutting off the previous experience. As the poem unfolds, the verbal statement is literally realised on the visual plane. Such a metamorphosis results in the gradual reduction of the physical dimensions of the iconically represented object to a small fragment appearing on the final plane. This visually overplayed literal reading of the metaphorical discourse creates an apparent humorous effect.

Like Alex Ocheretyansky, the Chicago-based Rafael Levchin, is a former resident of Kyiv, for whom Russian is the main language of creative activity. The main concern of Levchin, who defines himself as "postavangardist with the archaic tendency of both leftist and rightist bias,"[225] is the collage technique. In his black-black-white and multicoloured collages he amalgamates all sorts of printed material: newspaper clippings and inscriptions in different languages (mainly in Russian and English), photographs, iconic signs, indices, reproductions of famous pictures, mathematical symbols, drawings, etc., often with the intention of producing humorous effect. Some of his collages the author calls "nonpoems slidefilms," referring primarily to their photographic and kinetic qualities, as well as to their prosaic content deeply anchored in the non-poetic reality of everyday life (Fig. 145). Besides, Levchin writes conventional poetry of philosophic tendency, plays and also figure poems. One of them "Podrazhanie Brekhtu"[226] ("In Brecht's Motif," fig. 146) is composed in the canonical form of a figure poem, yet recalls various historical and literary allusions on the referential level. Thematically the poem deals with the beginning of Christianity, which chronologically was adopted in the Western world shortly after an unsuccessful revolt of gladiators against Rome in 73-71 B.C., which was headed by the Thracian slave Spartacus. For this reason, the text of the poem is shaped as a sword and a stylized cross, the latter having a dual connotation, as a Christian sign *par excellence*, and as a means of execution (which was later turned into a Christian sign) which is referred to in the poem in its final lines:

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[223] Ocheretyansky, A.; Rakhimov, B. *Stuxopuc* (New York: Sobytie, 1987).

[224] The analogous technique of mimicking the dynamics of moving images was used by Canadian poet of Ukrainian descent Brian Dedora, whose composition, however, does not contain any structural elements other than textual configurations. Dedora's work is discussed in the next chapter.

[225] Levchin, Rafael. Letter to the author, n. d., 1996.

| | |
|---|---|
| Shest tysiach krestov | Six thousand crosses |
| kak prisnivshiisia aerodrom | as a nightmarish aerodrom |
| torchali v nebo. | piercing the sky. |
| Tak, | Thus, |
| pod znakom kresta | under the auspices of the |
| nacinalas | cross |
| novaia | started |
| era. | the new |
| | era.[227] |

The metaphorical comparison *kak prisnivshiisia aerodrom* ("as a nightmarish aerodrom"), relating to the erected crosses with crucified slaves, links the period described in the poem to the reality of the technological era, by focusing on denotation of the word "aerodrome" and its recent inclusion into the lexical corpus of the language, as well as the specific spatial projection mentioned in the poem. The constellation of crosses does resemble an aerodrome with air-planes only from the point at which a plane is turning in the air immediately after taking-off or just before landing. Therefore, this comparison reflects the perception of a modern man, who has an experience of flight.

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[226] *Otrazhenie / Reflection* 7 (1996): 78.

[227] Levchin, Rafael. "In Brecht's Motif." Trans. E. Nayevelt. *Otrazhenie / Reflection* 7 (1997).

There is a substantially smaller production of visual poetry in Russian in the USA than in other Western countries. However, many expatriate poets occasionally turn to this kind of experimentation. This gives some hope for successful continuation of the genre development on the continent. In Canada the far less abundant Russian-speaking diaspora to date has not fostered any visual poet.

In general, visual poetry in Russian comprises an impressive corpus of works of unquestionable appeal and complexity. Russian visualists attempt and successfully realize various types of experimentation. Many consciously use the innovations of Russian Futurists and Constructivists. This does not mean that their own creative attempts lack novelty as work by Sigei, Nikonova, Biriukov, Gornon, Netzkowa, Sherstjanoi, Ocheretyansky and others attest. The creative legacy of the earlier Russian poets who relied on visualization, primarily that of Simeon Polotskii, however, does not seem to inspire contemporary experimentalists. Paradoxically, works of the Ukrainian Baroque poet, Ivan Velychkovskyi, which are typically included in all the anthologies of Russian visual poetry, as well as analyzed in academic publications by Russian and Western scholars, are held in much higher regard by the Russian visualists.

The scope of the present study does not permit the inclusion of other visual works in the corpus of the analyzed material. Nonetheless, even selected works in Russian (irrespective of the country of their creation) which are produced for perception "through the eye not through the ear"[228] successfully refute a statement made by the well-known Russian expert of conventional poetry Michail Gasparov that

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[228] Lissitzky-Küppers, S. *El Lissitzky: Life, Letters, Texts* (Greenwich: New York Graphic Society, 1968), 356.

> the devices of concrete poetry are obviously limited; in fact, each new device exhausts itself after the first example, all subsequent texts written on the same pattern seeming to be unnecessary clones. This form of verse may serve as an experimental laboratory, but cannot be used for a mass production: is a dead end [sic].[229]

Gasparov's statement seems to me both confusing and contradictory at the same time. In terms of originality, as opposed to cloning, very few poetic forms demonstrate considerable mutability. The sonnet, for example, characterised by Gasparov as one of the "principal fixed forms,"[230] has a very limited number of basic rhyming schemes (Italian: abab+ abab+ cdcdcd; or abba+abba, followed by cdc+dcd or by cde+cde; French: abab+abab or abba +abba followed either by ccd+eed or ccd+ede; English: abab+cdcd+efef+gg), and every new poem of this genre basically clones one of the registered repeated patterns, even those which may be recognized as experimentation within the genre. Nonetheless, Gasparov does not label the experiments of sonneteers as unnecessary cloning leading to "a dead end." As for the idea of cloning itself as poorly adjusted to the needs of mass production, it would be sufficient to recall that mass production is based on the principle of manufacturing a standardized pattern on a large scale, which is quite close to the idea of cloning as producing copies of an already existing model. Further elaboration of this subject is not required for our purpose, however I would like to mention briefly that visually unorthodox writing is widely used for commercial and advertising purposes, and this type of creation may be seen as mass production.

Visual poetry in Russian, besides developing concretism, conceptualism, lettrism and other international trends of visualization, also fuses many radical innovations of linguistic literature as well. Being essentially multicultural as a result of the various ethnic backgrounds of the authors, and their exposure to diverse forms of modern (or rather postmodern) cultural practice and sensibility, it apparently has a high appeal for readers as a sophisticated and yet very accessible form of cultural communication. This conviction leaves room for hope that visual poetry in Russian will not only progress as successsfully as it has done up to the present, but will also receive finally the national and international scholarly attention it is due, and that the disappointing gap between the object and the critical response to it will be successfully bridged.

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[229] Gasparov, M.L *A History of European Versification.* Trans. G.S. Smith and Marina Tarlinskaja (Oxford: Claredndon Press, 1996), 292.

[230] Gasparov, 161.

# CHAPTER 3. CONTEMPORARY VISUAL POETRY IN UKRAINIAN

Visual poetry in Ukrainian is created at present not only in Ukraine but also in North America, and in expatriate communities in Germany and France. This kind of writing has not captured the critical attention it deserves, although the situation in Ukrainian scholarship, however, has gradually been changing. Ukrainian practitioners of visual poetry, such as Mykola Soroka, whose area of research is the Ukrainian visual poetry of medieval and Baroque times, Mykola Miroshnychenko, Anatolii Moisiienko, Ivan Luchuk and others, are attempting to theorize on the subject, although their contribution in most cases is limited to prefaces to anthologies, brief surveys in popular journals and newspapers, as well as short entries on visual poetry and related issues in literary dictionaries and encyclopedias. This modest scholarship is by no means proportional to the impressive achievements of contemporary visual poetry in Ukrainian, whether created in Europe or in Northern America. Nor does it offer an appropriate response and serious discussion of many questions – aesthetic, technical, terminological and methodological – which are raised by the contemporary state of the genre.

It is worth mentioning that visual poetry in Ukrainian reflects more than one lexico-grammatical variant of the Ukrainian language, which is not uniform over the territories where it is spoken. Ukrainian of the Canadian and American Ukrainian community is based on the so-called Western variant of Ukrainian which differs phonetically, grammatically, stylistically, and lexically from the variant which is used by the population of Ukraine nowadays. The same variant of Ukrainian is used by prewar emigrants and those who left the country during World War II, while most recent emigrants, who left Ukraine in the 1970s or later (the third wave) tend to follow standards which are established on the territory of contemporary Ukraine. Another important thing is the question of language proficiency as realised in the creative output. Authors from Ukraine successfully develop forms of visual poetry which require the production of semantically complex and coherent poetic texts (palindromes, acrostics, "crabs," pattern poems, rebuses). Ukrainian-Canadian authors are predisposed to a "minimal" usage of the Ukrainian language within the framework of their poems, inasmuch as the production of meaningful and relatively lengthy texts (especially with obvious literary qualities) that are free from the "discourse accents" in a second (or third) language, would undoubtedly require a much higher level of language proficiency, than is practically attainable by non-native speakers. This tendency toward "minimal" usage of language seems to be a useful solution when the endeavour involves the communication of a message from a non-dominant or marginalized culture (like the Ukrainian culture in Canada or in the USA) to people who are unacquainted with a minority cultural and linguistic code. It goes without saying that for Ukrainian-Canadian poets, born and raised in a predominantly non-Ukrainian environment, English is the main language of communication, and Western culture – in its North American variant – is a far more influential factor informing creative orientation than ethnic heritage.

Not surprisingly, the body of poetry which utilizes either Ukrainian traditions of visual literature, or the language itself, forms only a small part of the sizeable literary legacy created by Canadian poets of Ukrainian descent. This does not mean that the relatively modest corpus of visual poetry in Ukrainian has less significance and artistic value than visual poetry in English. In many cases both the handling of ethnic themes and motifs, and the synthesis of the formal inventions of Ukrainian Baroque and Futurist poets with that of Western masters considerably enriches the poets' technical arsenal and imagery. Nonetheless, the creative output of the Ukrainian poets based in Ukraine is apparently far more anchored in national traditions of visual writing than that of the Ukrainian Canadians. Another important divergence between Ukrainian Canadian and Ukrainian visual poetry is the resourcefulness of language. Ukrainian authors display a penchant for verbal inventiveness, word play and utilization of various tropes and stylistic figures even in verbally compressed visual poems, which in most cases is not characteristic of Western visual poets of Ukrainian descent, in spite of the fact that they enthusiastically explore the potential of word play in their native tongue.

## CREATIVE OUTPUT OF VISUAL POETS FROM UKRAINE

Ukrainian visual poetry has demonstrated its most impressive achievements in the technical virtuosity and diversity of subjects and genres in so-called "continental" Ukrainian literature (as opposed to that of the diaspora). Ukrainian poets who successfully compose visual poetry are quite numerous, but many of them are also known as conventional poets, prose writers, scholars and artists. The majority of them belong to the younger generation of

Ukrainian men of letters, with Mykola Miroshnychenko, born in 1947, holding the position of the patriarch of the genre. However, there is no rule without exceptions: the Reverend Mykola Sarma-Sokolovskyi (born in 1910), an artist and poet, has recently turned to visual poetry as well. In previous years Sarma-Sokolovskyi did not have much chance to develop his literary and artistic gift to the fullest: he had served his sentence as a political prisoner in the Soviet labour camps for 17 years and later, after his release in 1961, was under surveillance by the KDB (the equivalent of the KGB in Ukraine).

It is generally known that in the West a new wave of interest in visual poetry arose in the 1950s and 1960s, when innovations and acquisitions of the antecedents of contemporary visual poetry such as Dada, Futurism, Constructivism were intentionally developed and modernized by visual poets in many countries. In Ukraine, however, this period of time was not marked by special concern for visual writing (although some texts which emphasized visual elements were composed by Mykola Kholodnyi), despite the fact that conventional poetry, for a short time freed from constraints of the prevailing social realism and represented by Lina Kostenko, Vasyl Symonenko, Ivan Drach, Vasyl Holoborodko, Ihor Kalinets, Mykola Vingranovskyi and other *shestydesiatnyky* (the generation of the Sixties), experienced a considerable renewal of poetic forms and subjects. This period of experimentation and innovation lasted for a decade, and at the beginning of the 1970s it was completely suppressed by the Soviet authorities. In the following decades in Ukraine, where ideological and cultural censorship was more severe than in Moscow, almost no innovative form could be approved for public display, especially such an obscure genre as visual poetry, intrinsically incompatible with the dogmas of socialist realism. Another reason for the undeclared but strictly observed prohibition of visual writing was provoked by its very nature: visual playfulness and optical effects, as Soviet leaders believed, might conceale some "ideologically erroneous" messages skilfully encoded in disintegrated and fractured forms or hidden in words intended to be read in reverse. The latter could slip past a censor's attention and thus significantly undermine the fundamentals of the "most progressive society."

For this reason one of a few samples of visual poetry of the time, Mykola Kholodnyi's column poem "Odyn-dva"[1] ("One-two," fig. 147) was included as an anti-Soviet document in exhibits of the author's criminal case. Besides its unorthodox layout the poem itself does not contain a single anti-Soviet or even ambiguous word as it reads: "One. Two. One. Two. One. Two. Two. One. Two. One. Two. One. One. One. One. Oho! No one." It is truly amazing that the KDB experts could discern any provocative or undermining message from such an innocent discourse. Another experimental work by the same author entitled "Formula shliubnoi nochi"[2] ("Formula of A Conjugal Night," fig. 148) with the subtitle *symfoniia* ("the symphony") is a humorous representation of love chemistry. $C_2H_2OH$ is a molecular formula of ethanol alcohol to be taken in the quantity of 1kg and shared by the two, $C_{19}H_{28}O_2$ and $C_{18}H_{22}O_2$ are molecular formulas of testosterone and estrogen, whereas the symbol I→ O unequivocally suggests love-making. This scientific-looking visual joke was identified by the KDB agents as a secret code between the CIA and the author. These and other works were returned to the author only in 1992, more than two decades after their confiscation. To the poet's great surprise each page of his poetic text was stamped with the seal of the Kyiv Scientific and Research Institute of Criminal Expertise.[3]

Such close attention of the political authorities to the creative output of visual poets could not stimulate extensive experiments on their part or any desire to share their achievements with the public. Those who dared to be engaged in such dubious creativity faced another insoluble problem – where to publish their works. Any publication of experimental and apparently innovative works was very problematic, if possible at all: the state-supported publishing houses as well as journals and newspapers could not accept ideologically irrelevant production, while the *samvydav* (self-published press of dissidents) was preoccupied with the proliferation of anti-Soviet, nationalistic and other political issues rather than visual oddments of any kind. In general, it was much safer for authors to refrain from any attempt to publish. For this reason one of the earliest participants of contemporary visual poetry Mykola

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[1] Kholodnyi, Mykola. *Usmishka Dzhokondy* (Kyiv: Radianskyi pysmennyk, 1995), 33.

[2] Kholodnyi, 115.

[3] Kholodnyi, 114.

Miroshnychenko, who created his first palindrome in 1971,[4] published his collection *Oko*[5] *(An Eye,* 1989) with a substantial amount of palindromes and other visual poems eighteen years later. Another Ukrainian poet, the late Volodymyr Luchuk, managed to publish his palindrome in children's book *Charivnyi hlobus* (*The magic globe*, 1977), by abstaining from acknowledging the genre.

Only with Gorbachov's declaration of *glasnost* and *perestroika* (known as *perebudova* in Ukrainian) in 1985, was a process similar to the cultural renaissance in the first part of the century (when Ukraine proclaimed its political extrication from the Russian empire) triggered. This process became especially noticeable after the proclamation of independence in 1991. The liberalizing movement of the late 1980s and early 1990s assumed a variety of forms, and men of letters as well as other cultural activists responded to the issues it raised. The full attainment of human rights and freedoms was undoubtedly the major objective of democratization of society and state. Such issues as the protection of the Ukrainian language and cultural development, however, were not neglected. For many writers, poets, and artists the new democratic changes were associated with the striving for creative freedom. It is not accidental that the first organised group of Ukrainian visual poets, composed primarily of the authors of palindromic forms, was founded in 1991, the year of the proclamation of Ukrainian independence.[6] In their first declaration of 29 September 1991 this group, called Heraklit (an abbreviation in Ukrainian of Holinni Entuziasty Raka Literalnoho – Courageous Enthusiasts of the Literary Crab), proclaimed the following:

Finally, the period of socialist realism has 'successfully' run its course in the continental Ukrainian literature, which now can return to its natural state. Though, it is not an easy task for it, a poor sick thing. . . For such a disease, according to Alfred de Musset, "has two reasons: what existed before – does not exist anymore, but what will exist – likewise still does not exist." Thus it is not surprising that the premonition of the appearance of such a literary group as Heraklit (a quite unexpected occurence for many people) was transmitted from the depths of the baroque consciousness to our temporal and spacious emptiness.[7]

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[4] Miroshnychenko, Mykola. "Poeziia dvostoronnioho strumuvannia movy," *Slovo i chas* 4 (1998): 47.

[5] Miroshnychenko, Mykola. *Oko* (Kyiv: Radianskyi pysmennyk, 1989).

[6] In his letter of November 5, 1994 to the author of the present study Mykola Miroshnychenko wrote: "Three years ago I initiated in Kyiv the meeting of palindromists, which I found throughout Ukraine and to whom I wrote letters. This way the literary group Heraklit was founded [...]. Membership in Heraklit hold several Kyivates: myself, Anatolii Moisiienko, Mykola Luhovyk, Mykola Soroka; Kost Pavliak from Cherkasy, Volodymyr Sapon from Chernihiv, Leonid Strelnyk from Luhansk, Nazar Honchar, Mykhailo Iuryk, Natalka Chorpita, Iryna Kodlubai and Ivan Luchuk (the son of the late Sixtier Volodymyr Luchuk [...]) from Lviv and also Hanna Cherin from the diaspora. [...] Well, I have skipped two other names from the group Heraklit – Viktoriia Stakh, a poet from Kyiv, and Ivan Iov from Khmelnytskyi. That is to say, there are fourteen of us."

Obviously, the palindrome[8] is not the sole genre successfully developed by Ukrainian practitioners of visual writing; however, it is truly remarkable how popular this linguistically complex subform has become in a relatively short period of time in Ukrainian literature. It is not unexpected that the first issues of the *Zryma ryma* (this title can be rendered as "Visible Rhyme"), the journal of visual poetry, founded in 1998 by the Kyiv-based graphic artist Volodymyr Chuprynin (who is better known by his pseudonym Volkhv Slovovezha), covered many theoretical issues of the Ukrainian palindrome and included most impressive and ingenious works in this vein.

It is true that palindrome has a long and rich tradition in Ukrainian visual writing, which was also continued by the Russian Futurist Klebnikov[9] and the poet of the younger generation Semen Kirsanov, a "Futurist fledgeling"[10] (both were familiar with the creative output of Ivan Velychkovskyi), but for some reason never drew the attention of Ukrainian Futurists. As Mykola Miroshnychenko suggests, Mikhailo Semenko and his colleagues were not specially interested in exploring the palindrome mainly because they preferred to pave their individual path in Futurism rather than follow their Russian counterparts,[11] whose experiments with palindromic form were most likely known to them. Despite its seeming plausibility, Miroshnychenko's suggestion is incorrect. For Semenko and his colleagues the concept of destroying old aesthetic and literary values was one of the basic premises of their creativity. For this reason they refused "thrashing over old straw"[12] whether it was a question of Khlebnikov's or someone else's attempts to revitalize past experiments. In this sense the contemporary generation of Ukrainian poets differs from Futurists practitioners, inasmuch as many of them have a clear sense of what their predecessors had done. The fact that one of the well-known visual poets, Mykola Soroka, recently published a scholarly book on Ukrainian visual poetry of the 16th-18th century, speaks for itself.

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[7] Miroshnychenko, Mykola. "Pobachyty lyny navyvorit," *Zryma ryma* 1 (1998): 22.

[8] Members of the group Heraklit distinguish two types of palindromic poems: palindromes, in which each line reads alike backward or forward; and palindromons (another term is reciprocal palindromes), in which the whole text reads alike in either direction letter by letter. See: Mykola Miroshnychenko. "Poeziia dvostoronnoho strumuvannia movy," *Slovo i chas* 4 (1998) 47-52; Ivan Luchuk, *Palindromony* (Lviv: Astron, 1997), 2. Earlier the same idea was uttered in Mykola Miroshnychenko's letter to the author of November 5, 1994.

[9] Khlebnikov's mother, Ekaterina Verbitskaia, was Ukrainian by origin.

[10] Markov, Vladimir. *Russian Futurism: A History* (Berkely and Los Angelos: University of California Press, 1968), 371.

Continuity in Ukrainian visual poetry is, nonetheless, not the sole reason for affection for the palindrome among many authors. I would suggest that noticeable concern for linguistically intricate and sophisticated transformations, word games and other forms of experimentation (of which the palindromic subform is an impressive example), which are not really separated from traditional writing, are stimulated to a great extent by the nationwide process of de-Russification of the Ukrainian language and rehabilitation of the latter's social and communicative status. As has been mentioned before, for quite a long time the Ukrainian language was not recognised as the country's official language, and from time to time it was even banned throughout the territory of Ukraine. The gradual restriction of Ukrainian and strong pressure for Russification[13] began shortly after the conclusion of the Pereiasliv Treaty of 1654 (when the autonomy of the Ukrainian state was considerably restrained) and since that time Ukrainian has been discriminated against in favour of Russian for centuries. A short period of national revival immediately after the Revolution of 1917, accompanied by the expansion of the Ukrainian language into various spheres of social activity as well as cultural and literary production, was slowed down in 1922 when the independent Ukraine was occupied by Soviets, and finally eliminated in the early 1930s. Another brief period of deviation from the Soviet pro-Russian language and cultural policy occurred in the late 1960s, but by the middle of the 1970s Russification was in full swing again.

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[11] Miroshnychenko, Mykola. "Poeziia dvostoronnoho strumuvannia movy," 47.

[12] This expressions was used in the letter of the Kharkiv artistic group "Soiuz Semi" (the Union of Seven), which was characterised by a more restrained approach to new vanguard ideas and concepts than any of Futurists groups founded and headed by Semenko. Nonetheless, it clearly reflects the general attitude of the Avant Garde writers and artists to the legacy of their predecessors. "Soiuz "Semi". "Pismo v redaktsiiu," *Kolosia*, 6-7 (1918), 23.

[13] In *Encyclopedia of Ukraine* Bohdan Kravtsiv and Volodymyr Kubijovyč define Russification "a set of policies or processes encouraging non-Russians to adopt the Russian language and culture and thus increasing Russian political domination in Ukraine and other Eastern European Countries" (470). Russification was practised by tsarist Russia for centuries, however it was under the Soviet regime when it became especially large and included all social strata throughout the territory of Ukraine.

Nowadays Ukrainian masters, in addition to obtaining an opportunity of exploring their language and discovering potential transformations in its structure, have finally received their chance – despite numerous economic difficulties, which, in fact, do not discourage their creative enthusiasm – to publish the outcome of their experimental efforts. The results appeared immediately, and the popularity of the palindromic subform is just one out of many pieces of evidence that attests to this. It would be relevant to mention briefly that Ivan Luchuk, the Lviv-based poet, translator and scholar published in 1993 the palindromic text "Epos i nyni sope" ("The Epic Is Still Snoring"), which comprises 3,333 letters and, as the author suggests, is the longest palindromic text in the world. As far as the lengths of the poem is concerned Luchuk's achievement toppled the previous record of Herbert Pfeiffer German "Plaudere, du Alp!", which has 1,805 letters, and that of Nazar Honchar's "Moloko bentezh reve leverzhet nebokolom," also in Ukrainian (1,691 letters). Another quite impressive achievement of the

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Soviet efforts at Russifying Ukrainians resulted in the total elimination of the Ukrainian language from the military sphere and its restriction in science and technology. Instruction in secondary and vocational-technical schools, as well as medical, polytechnical, industrial, commercial, agricultural and economic institutions of higher learning was also Russian with the exception of few institutions located in Western Ukraine. If in 1926 only 4.5 percent of Ukrainians in Ukraine considered Russian their first language, in 1989 78.4 percent of population of Ukraine was fluent in Russian and 78 percent in Ukrainian. The language of communication and office work was predominantly Russian, especially in the urban areas. It is not surprising that during Gorbachov's era of *glasnost* Russification became one of the topical issues to be discussed and debated widely and heatedly in both scholarly publications and mass media. In 1989 the Taras Shevchenko Ukrainian Language Society was founded as an instrument of the national language revival. The same year the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR adopted the Language Act establishing Ukrainian as the official language. However, till nowadays Russification has not been overcome in large areas of the country. See: Kravtsiv, B., Kubijovyč, V. "Russification, " *Encyclopedia of Ukraine,* Vol. IV. Ed. Danylo Husar Struk (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 470-471.

Ukrainian palindromists are palindromic sonnets by Anatolii Moisiienko[14], Nazar Honchar, and Ivan Luchuk. Moisiienko's sonnet "A kolo tini – toloka..." ("And near the shadow is the pastureland. . .") reverses line by line. Luchuk's work, titled "Sonet-tenos."[15] with a subtitle *epichni reministsentsii, abo palindromna sylabika* ("epic reminiscences, or palindromic syllabification") has the canonical form of a reciprocal palindrome which produces the same utterance, letter by letter, in either direction. Honchar's "'Te nosim my" ("'We Wear 'This.'") also a reciprocal palindrome or palindromon. In addition, Moisiienko sonnet is pure palindrome, in which the exact mirror effect is achieved by reverse reading. Luchuk maintains the same acoustic effect, as well as Honchar, but the soft sign is discounted in the reverse utterance of the words *temin*[ ] ("darkness") and *vidkil*[ ] ("whence") in Luchuk's sonnet, and the words *nivets*[ ] ("naught") and *virytel*[ ]("believer"') in Honchar's composition. The three sonnets are rhymed, Moisiienko's being the Shakespearian version of the form (*abab cdcd efef gg*), and Luchuk's showing an affinity with the Italian or Petrarchan structure of an octave with the rhyme scheme a*bba cddc* and a sestet (*efefef*). In Honchar's sonnet all lines but one are linked by identical tonic vowel and the following consonant.

Admittedly, palindromes are close to pattern or visual poetry but not really part of it. In most cases palindromes are not perceived as intermedial texts as their layout does not differ visually from that of the conventional poem, at least at first glance. For this sole reason Volodymyr Luchuk contrived to outwit a vigilant Cerberus of a censor in the publication of his camouflaged palindromic poem.

There are exceptions, of course, but they are not numerous. And yet the Ukrainian palindromists, unlike their Russian colleagues, have achieved impressive results in visualizing the form. Several Ukrainian practitioners, in cooperation with graphic artists, explore linguistic and pictorial properties of the configured or videopalindrome, and their experimentations along this line have proved to be successful.

Among the most interesting works in this vein are two visual compositions by the Kyivan graphic artist and visual practitioner, Myroslav Korol, based on Mykola

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[14] *Almanakh Liter-A*, 36.

[15] *Almanakh Liter-A*, 27.

Miroshnychenko's palindromic text. The first work (Fig. 149) is shaped as an hourglass (one of the most productive forms in Korol's creative output) in which the first line reads along the vertical axis as *Vik – pysanyna sypkiv* ("An age is the writing of outporings"), while the second line *V iksi piskiv* ("In the "x" of sands") together with its mirror reflection outline the body of the hourglass. Another composition by the same creative duo alludes to the music of the well-known German composer Robert Schumann (Fig. 150). Consequently, the autograph of Schumann's notation serves as a background for the shell-shaped figure with the palindromic text on its surfice. The text itself reads *U mushli popil shumu, a na mushli popil Shumana* ("The dust of noise is in the shell, and the ash of Schumann is on the shell"). The original composition looks more impressive than its reproduction, inasmuch as a mixed technique (collage, electric scorching, xeroks-copying) was employed for its design. The creative cooperation of the well-established poet Mykola Miroshnychenko with the young talented artist Myroslav Korol is a relatively new endeavour, which, however, has already born its fruits. Mykola Miroshnychenko, however, began his experimentation with the visual dimension of palindromes before his cooperation with Korol. His untitled palindrome[16] (Fig. 151), which reads *Oo u rozlit, ia – diatil zoru, oko* ("Eye in various directions, I am the woodpecker of the sight"), employs unconventional topography and non-linear word arrangement. Besides, the Ukrainian letter *d*, the initial letter of the noun *diatil* (which can also be spelled as *diatel* meaning "woodpecker") functions as a stylized nose and its bridge, supporting eyeglasses with earpieces in the form of question marks.

Volkhv Slovovezha is another graphic artist who is engaged in palindromic visualizing. By using various scripts he turns palindromic works by Anatolii Moisiienko and Mykola Miroshnychenko into refined and highly technical compositions, typically in black and white, and rich in calligraphic elements of the Old Slavonic and Baroque scripts. For this reason his compositions are highly ornamental, although they preserve all the essential linguistic qualities of the original palindromic form. This intermediary technique is often defined as "poezographics," most likely suggesting an analogy with Semenko's *poezomaliarstvo* ("poetry-painting"). Volkhv Slovovezha's graphical interpretations of Miroshnychenko's palindromes are reminiscent of geometrical ornamentations of the Early Slavic manuscripts (Fig. 152). Many of them comprise direct or reversing pictorial mirrors symmetrical about the axial letter. Poezographical versions of Moisiienko's palindromes differ considerably in terms of their stylistics. Twisting turns and spirals undoubtedly resemble direct and reverse volutes of the architectural style known as the Cossack Baroque; while cascades of dynamic vertical lines are suggestive of the handwriting scripts popular at the same period (Fig. 153). One of Volkhv Slovovezha's poezographical versions has already become a classical work of the subgenre, being published and referred to in many scholarly and popular editions.[17] Read as *Khyzhykh mechem myrym* ("We reconcile the ravishers by sword," fig. 154), it suggests the historical referent on both verbal and visual levels, though it may have wider implications in the metaphorical sense. This work is one of a few asymmetrical poezographical compositions produced by the artist. The axial letter *r* is shaped as a curved sword and therefore breaks the mirror symmetry, adding a dramatic touch to the composition, in which the configurations of two letters, namely *y* and *e,* are distorted for the sake of the mirror symmetry. Although Volkhv Slovovezha does nor write palindromes, he composes nondiscursive compositions, which are symmetrically arranged about the central axis. Two of them, "Ukrainske narodne maliarstvo XIX stolittia" ("Ukrainian Folk Painting of the XIX Century," fig. 155) and "Ukrainske narodne maliarstvo XX stolittia ("Ukrainian Folk Painting of the XX century," fig. 156), he defines as palindromic works.[18] As far as symmetry in concerned, lettristic compositions by Volkhv Slovovezha and Tetiana Chuprynina "Dim" ("House," fig. 157) and "Mif" ("Myth," fig. 158), are also of interest inasmuch as the vertical axes are placed inside the overlapping letters which compose[19] each individual word, requiring them to be read as a a whole unit.

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[16] *Ukrainska mova ta literatura* 6 (1996): 12.

Needless to say, the body of configured palindromes is very small in contemporary Ukrainian visual writing. As might be expected, none of them has been reported in the creative legacy of the visual practitioners in diaspora. Nor is there any documented evidence of the

[17] *Zryma ryma* 1 (1998): 44.

[18] *Zryma ryma* 1 (1998): 45.

[19] *Zryma ryma* 1 (1998): 29-31.

earlier tradition of this subform in the Ukrainian literature. The configured palindrome is largely a product of the modern approach to a word as a multifunctional unit, whose spatial connotation is not suppressed or neglected by its involvement in linguistic games.

Although a close examination of conventional palindromes is not the object of the present study, which is focused on the subgenres of visual poetry with an explicit nondiscursive component, a brief concluding comment on the palindrome as a form of linguistic literature would be relevant inasmuch as linguistic inventiveness is an essential element of their creativity of the Ukrainian visual practitioners. Unlike their Futurist predecessors, contemporary Ukrainian visual poets are not very much concerned with a revolutionary reformation of conventional syntax and the creation of a new vocabulary. Their main interest lies in reforming poetic expression without radical destruction of the standard language. It should be noted that Ukrainian, like Russian, Greek, Latin, Arabic, etc. is a so-called inflected language, in which inflections have a grammatical function, and word-building and grammatical relationships are dependent on these bound morphemes. As John White argues, such a structural peculiarity specifically suits neologistic experiments,[20] successfully attempted by Russian, Ukrainian and German Futurist poets, which is primarily due to this innate structural feature of their working languages. Not surprisingly, numerous efforts to translate works of avant-garde poets written in inflected languages into English, a language of a different taxonomic type, were not especially successful. And the main problem here lies in the impossibility of rendering accurately enough the implied meanings of the derived neologisms. With palindromes the situation is quite different, inasmuch as the vocabulary available for palindromic exercises is limited in all languages. The abundance of bound morphemes, which is typical of an inflected language, results in a further narrowing of the word pool. Thus in Ukrainian palindromic writing is inseparable from intensive linguistic experimentation, especially in the area of non-inflectional word-formation.

In the work of Ivan Iov, the Khmelnytskyi-based poet, entitled "Periodychna systema sliv"[21] ("The Periodic Table of Words," fig. 159) 65 of the 98 entries are reversible words, 64 being symmetrical palindromes and one phonetically symmetrical. In fact Iov's periodic table, besides being a periodical system of word philosophy, is also a glossary for palindromic words, which includes habitual forms of the palindromic repertoire (*potop* – "flood," oko – "eye," *pup* – "navel," *Pylyp* – male's name, the Ukrainian variant of Philip, etc.) as well as newly invented words: *chakvakvach*, *dorihirod*, nimohomin" and others. Perhaps the most surprising discovery of Iov's system is that even well-known reversible words receive new and frequently unexpected interpretations *did* ("grandfather") is represented as the correlation "past-present"; *pup* ("navel") as "that which distinguishes the sole"; oko ("eye") is defined as the perception of the world; *zaraz* ("now") as the act of creativity. Iov's system of words alludes to *zaum*, the transrational language, as well as other poetic and linguistic phenomena, to philosophical and religious categories of life and death (the latter represented as a nondiscursive sign, a cross in the centre of a square), to existential and spiritual laws, to sign and code systems and other realities. The hermeticism of Iov's compostition shows a certain correspondence with "magic squares"[22] and Hebrew micrographic texts, rich in hidden and symbolic meaning, although gnostic presuppositions of Iov's concept, as revealed in his system of words, differ from cabbalistic doctrine and practice. According to Piotr Rypson, the Cabala's mysticism of script and language, as reflected in Hebrew micrographic texts,

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[20] White, John J. *Literary Futurism: Aspect of the First Avant Garde* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 230.

> rested on the conviction that the duration of things, which come from all-emanating Creator, may be controlled by controlling their form, implying letters and words. They were considered a form of reality, while thinking usually carries us away from being.[23]

Hence, in cabbalistic practice the disintegration of thoughts into essential literal forms is attempted for further transformation into names. The essence of these transformative operations, however, does not lie "in magical manipulations on words," as Rypson further suggests, but in "introvert work performed on the mind understood as a part of the Great Whole" which results in attaining "the final union between micro- and macro-order [...], freeing the mind from its individual trait."[24] The work of the Ukrainian visual practitioner is aimed at revealing hidden corelations between notions as well as the words' trandescendent nature (and in this respect, palindromes are especially useful), while clearly stating the limitations of such an endeavour by the concluding sentence of the composition, written in Old Cyrillic letters at the very bottom of the table, which reads: "The enigma of God is inexpressible."

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[21] Iov, Ivan. *Periodychna systema sliv* (Khmelnytskyi: Dolia, 1997), 64.

[22] More than one researcher suggests that *carmina quadrata* and *cancellata* derive from cabbalistic texts, which they resemble. According to Dick Higgins, however, such a supposition is a moot point. To date no Hebrew labyrinths have been reported, and the earliest Hebrew pattern poems do not have grid structure or other obvious connections with square poems or poems with the *versus intexti*. See: Higgins, Dick. *Pattern Poetry: Guide to Unknown Literature*, 57, 198).

[23] Rypson, Piotr. "The Labyrinth Poem," *Visible Language*, XX:1 (1986), 83.

Linguistic experimentation of Ukrainian palindromists seems very useful for the mainstream development of various subforms of visual poetry in Ukraine. As Howard Bergerson observes, "the palindromic poet's purpose is to try to make something new and different *via words as such*,"[25] and this tendency seems to be very productive in contemporary visual writing of continental Ukrainian authors. This does not mean that their experimentation with visual and intermediate means is less significant or in any way inferior. What is important here is the fact that visual dimensions of the verbal message do not necessarily deprive it of the linguistic proprieties of poetic form (the specific placement of words, rhyme, meter, phonetics, and lexis), although the meaning of the message may be obscure because of the employed disjoineted syntax, rupture, broken lines, unorthodox layout and other means of visualization. Pattern poems by Mykola Lyhovyk, which are shaped as a cossack's hut on the background of the lit candle "Na spomyn z dnia 500-richchia Sichi" ("In Remembrance of the 500th Anniversary of Sich," fig. 160), glasses and a guitar "Pam"iati Dzhona Lennona" ("In Memory of John Lennon," fig. 161) or a temple (Fig. 162) are rhymed, and in most cases the rhythmic pattern is well established. Hence, the verbal component of many visual poems by Ukrainian authors has artistic value per se, and can be analysed as texts written in accordance with the requirements of the poetic genre. This rarely (if at all) occurs in visual poems composed by poets of the diaspora.

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[24] Rypson, 83.

[25] Bergerson, Howard W. *Palindromes and Anagrams* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1973), 2.

Mykola Miroshnychenko's pattern poem "Feniks-ptakh iz zemel rustykh"[26] ("Phoenix-bird from the Ruthenian Lands," fig. 163) has the recognizable shape of a bird (whether a mysterious phoenix or a plain chicken), thus the visual message is conveyed in a clear and unambiguous manner. The verbal discourse, however, is far from being that simple. The title itself sets a sort of linguistic puzzle even for a native speaker of the language due to the fact that the adjective in postposition *rustykh* with the meaning "Ruthenian" (which is "Ukrainian") is obsolete and typically not included in dictionaries of modern Ukrainian. The verbal meaning of the discourse is not resistant to interpretation, but the variety and abundance of poetic figures interwoven into a graphically and rhythmically unorthodox poetic fabric requires their thorough untangling and decodifying in the process of reading. The first thing to be mentioned is that Miroshnychenko's text is rhymed, although the rhyme scheme is not consistent in the course of the poem. In addition to cross and interwoven rhymes the author resorts to internal rhymes and rhymes within the same word, the latter graphically represented as one syllable column structure:

na-
vi-
sni

that means "annoying" [dreams], which, as Phoenix confesses, bother him in the Ruthenian lands. This particular structure emphasizes the semantics of the adjective *navisni,* inasmuch as each syllable is to be pronounced with an emphatic stress, although the meter of the whole stanza is continued unbroken. Other attributes of the same noun sny" ("dreams") are also emphasized, this time by the phenomenon defined by John White as "the generation."[27] In the vertical column-structure layout each line "has an equivalence to the preceding line and is built on exactly the same pattern as its successor,"[28] but the configuration of the fragments is created by removing a syllable (letter, word, etc.) from, or adding the same structural unit to, the subsequent line. Miroshnychenko employs the decreasing pattern of generation, which, however, is not vertically extended since it comprises only three lines:

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[26] *Literaturna Ukraina,* January 11 (1996): 4.

[27] White, John J. *Literary Futurism: Aspect of the First Avant Garde* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 263.

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|---|---|
| . . . **aby okolyshni** | . . . .in order that the surrounding |
| **i kolyshni** | past |
| **lyshni** | needless |
| sny. . . | dreams. . . |

The epiphoric repetition of the same two syllables creates sound effects in addition to visual ones. Together the one syllable column structure and the generative line paradigm are used to depict the bird's legs; and its spur is pictured by the two bent lines. The phoenix's eye – shaped as two letters *o* of different size, one enveloped in another, besides its purely pictorial image, can suggests an evocation of a structure of the co-ordinated poem, in which certain words, syllables or letters are placed to be read with both even and odd lines.

Miroshnychenko's "Feniks..." is stylistically and semantically very dense, which by and large is not particularly characteristic of pattern poetry. However, the purely poetic qualities of Miroshnychenko's works do not prevent linguistic or visual playfulness in his composition, nor the author's interest in typography and type design. In the poem dedicated to another Ukrainian visual practitioner Volodymyr Chuprynin, better known under his presudonym of Volkhv Slovovezha (Fig. 164) the trident – the main element of the official coat of arms of contemporary Ukraine and a state emblem which dates back to Kievan Rus"[29] – substitutes the combination of the three Ukrainian letters *BOB* ("vov") throughout the body of the poem. In his dedication Miroshnychenko pays tribute to Chuprynin, who was the first to recognize this symmetrical letter-combination in the state emblem. Moreover, as Chuprynin points out in one of his letters, due to the fact that the Cyrillic alphabet was also used as a literal system for numbers (which was based on the numerical system of Byzantine Greek) the letters *BOB* stand for the numerical combination 2-70-2.[30] According to Chuprynin, the multiplication of the numbers 2 x 70 x 2 creates harmonious astronomical cycles, reflecting the most important natural phenomena (280 days is the standard term of pregnancy; 140 days is the period of time for wheat to ripen in Ukraine, etc.). Moreover, as he further suggests, these numbers 2-70-2 are mentioned in the Gospel according to Luke and have a specific significance there (10:1): "Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them two and two ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come."[31] The number then, is considered to be a good token for Ukraine, the national symbol which may be interpreted in this way.

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[28] White, 264.

[29] The oldest depiction of the trident found on the territory of Ukraine, is dated to the 1st century AD. Archaeologists suggest that at that time it may have served as a symbol of power (attributed to the Greek sea god Poseidon) of one of the tribes which later constituted the Ukrainian people. The same symbol was also stamped on coins issued by Kievan Prince Volodymyr the Great (1015-1019) and his sons. Prince Volodymyr's trident was adopted as the coat of arms by the Government of Ukraine in 1918. After the restoration of the independence of Ukraine in 1991, the trident became the chief element of the state coat of arms. See: Zhukovsky, A. "Trident," *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, Vol. V. Ed. Danylo Husar Struk (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 283-284.

Another of Miroshnychenko's visual compositions,[32] exploring the rich potential of typography, letter arrangement and positioning is his untitled poem based on ethnic motifs (Fig. 165). In this work each of the male figures with the traditional Cossack scalp-lock consists of the three vertically arranged bold letters *O, M,* and *L,* which are read accordingly. In all three words the anthropomorphized combination of OML is placed in the middle of the word, thus interrupting its linear progression and setting a zig-zag pattern for reading. The poem is not very long, but its verbal medium is sophisticated and dense, as in previously discussed works by the same author. Whether consciously or not, in both traditional and visual poetry Miroshnychenko employs identical poetic strategies and techniques, as well as similar linguistic experimentation and a refined and rich vocabulary. The only other Ukrainian visual poet who demonstrates the same adherence to linguistically complex and sophisticated discourse is Ivan Iov, who, like Miroshnychenko, is well-known for both visual and traditional poetry.

The creative output of Iov is sizeable and diverse. Iov began his poetic career as the author of conventional poetry, although experimentation, including that with word arrangement, typography, and non-conventional poetic forms, lured him into the world of creativity long before he could publish any of his experimental works. Visual experiments appear in his fourth collection of poems *Knyha persha* (*The First Book*, 1991) to be consistently continued in *Rukopys* (*The Manuscript*, 1995), *Chernetka* (*The Rough-copy*, 1996), and *Nevybrane* (*Unselected*, 1998). One of the recent collections of Iov *Peryodychna systema sliv* (*The Periodic Table of Words*, 1997) is almost exclusively experimental. Iov plays with a variety of forms and genres, namely palindromes (including such rare subforms as anaphoric palindromes, in which each line begins with the same letter)[33] anagrams, square poems, acrostics, pattern poems, monostichs (poems consisting of a single line), verses with emphasized letters, anaphoric column-poems[34], etc. He also attempts to fuse various subforms within the framework of the same poem, as in his work "Shybenytsia"[35] ("Gallows"), in which palindromic lines are coupled with lines of an unorthodox typographical layout.

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[30] Chuprynin, Volodymyr. Letter to the author of December, 1995.

[31] *Holy Bible* (The Gideons International)

[32] *Literaturena Ukraina*, January 11 (1996): 4.

"Balada pro piskovyi hodynnyk"[36] ("Ballad of an Hourglass," fig. 166) is shaped like a hourglass. The form itself is not original and may be found in the tradition of visual writing of many European literatures. For some reason, however, it turned out to be productive in contemporary Ukrainian visual poetry, inasmuch as several years prior to Iov's publication another pattern poem of the same shape entitled "Piskovyi hodynnyk," ("Hourglass," fig. 167),[37] was published by Neda Nezhdana. Like Ivan Iov's poem, Nezhdana's "Piskovyi hodynnyk" is a rhymed work with an irregular rhythmic pattern and a random number of syllables and stresses in the line, which is perhaps not surprising, inasmuch as in both cases the peculiarities of the verbal discourse are determined by its visual dimensions. What is more amazing is the thematic similarity of the two poems, dealing with the sense of instability and unprotectedness of life (common for the dwellers of post-Soviet Ukraine), although the two poets offer different treatment of material. Iov draws attention to important social and moral issues, and his poetic voice is impassioned and bitter. Nezhdana resorts to a more restrained and meditative tone, and her poem is apparently written in a minor key as well. Besides sharing several poetic motifs and images, both poets refer to the Saviour as the source of hope and salvation in the final line. Iov's finale reads: radiite: u iaslakh vzhe Boh, iak v kolystsi. . . ("rejoice: God is in the manger as in a cradle. . ."), while Nezhdana's poem ends in *Odne na vsikh imia: tak nazyvaly Boha* ("There is one name for everyone: God was so named").[38]

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[33] Iov, Ivan. *Chernetka* (Khmelnytskyi: Dolia, 1996), 165.

[34] Iov, Ivan. *Chernetka* (Khmelnytskyi: Dolia, 1996), 147.

[35] Iov, 145.

[36] Iov, Ivan. *Rukopys* ((Khmelnytskyi: Dolia, 1995), 56.

[37] Nezhdana, Neda. "Kotovyshnia," *Ukraina*, 34 (1990).

Despite their visual similarity, some semantic correspondence and irregularity of rhythm and meter shared by both poems, they differ considerably in their linguistic resourcefulness and principles of text organization. Iov's verbal text is syntactically more complex and coherent, and semantically more informative. His syntactical patterns are better organized. In general his text meets the reader's expectations concerning the correctness and clarity of written discourse. Nezdana's poem does not contain obviously defective sentences or other forms of unplanned text (which in creative practice can be seen "as the means of evoking a number of associations and images, and therefore as an ideal"[39]), but her discourse is to a certain extent chaotic. Many of her literary devices lack precision and thus may be perceived as stylistically ungraceful structures rather than figures of speech or tropes. For example, *I svitiat skhody viry muchenykiv rebra* is generally an untranslatable phrase, but it may be roughly rendered as "And the sta[illegible] of faith of the martyrs' ribs shine"; and *V ochi vtika hroza po shchotsi* – "In the eyes the storm runs down the cheek." It should be kept in mind that in pattern poetry the syntax is not necessarily experimental or radical, since such a form is "in the broadest sense a lyrical text,"[40] which is organized in accordance with the established rules of versification. Thus, in solid form pattern poems[41] the necessity of composing a line of a definite length, determined by the visual configuration of the poem, may come in conflict with the conventional structures of syntax or its logic. In Nezhdana's "Piskovyi hodynnyk" the syntax is relatively traditional, although punctuation marks are omitted in most cases, and the last fifteen lines are predominantly paratactical. Nonetheless, the reader, who reads the poem line by line, at some point cannot get rid of the impression that the line sequence is predominantly motivated by the requirements of the purely pictorial shape and not by the consistent progress of the poet's thought, inasmuch as the logical cohesion of the poetic lines is quite loose, and the preceding line does not necessarily motivate the following. The result seems to be that the poetic discourse breaks up in several semantical fragments: *Polova buttia* ("The chaff of existence"), *Puls kul* ("The pulse of bullets"), *Ruka na rutsi* ("A hand on hand"), V ochi vtika hroza po shchotsi ("In the eyes the storm runs down on the cheek"), *Holos pronyzuie* ("The voice pierces"), etc. The whole composition is kept together by its visual form of the hourglass, which also suggests a symbolic meaning related to the verbal discourse. It is obvious that any chronometer is semantically associated with the inevitable passage of time. The hourglass, however, in addition to this notion, conveys the idea of the specified and limited period of time to be measured, which has a special significance for both Nezdana's meditation on the painful "chaff of existence" and Iov's emotional poetic reaction on the on-going ruination of life: *Hreshcheni, shcho koitsia z namy?!* ("Christians, what is happening to us?!"). In poetic discourse the idea of the specific time, associated with hardship and uncertainty, is transmuted into the notion of hope for revival, which may follow this most painful experience. It is interesting that the same image of the hourglass was employed by Myroslav Korol in his graphically outlined compositions "Chas i hroshi" ("Time and Money," fig. 168) from the cycle "Hroshi" ("Money") and the untitled composition (Fig. 169) from the cycle "Chas" ("Time"). The first of Korol's compositions illustrates the popular motto "Time is money" in which both notions are recognized as equal and interchangeable components of the formula due to the specific quality of the hourglass to function identically in an upright and upside down position. The linking element of two semicircles is the Ukrainian letter *ie* (which stands for the verb "to be" in the third person singular) altered by its mirror reflection. The second piece, a nondiscursive cartoon-like composition, metaphorically represents the process of keeping track of time by means of the hourglass. None of Korol's works elaborates the specific symbolic connotation of Iov's and Nezhdana's pieces.

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[38] The poems of both Iov and Nezdana were parodied by another Ukrainian poet Viktor Melnyk, whose parodies will be discussed further in the chapter.

[39] Bridgeman, Teresa. "Syntax and Impoliteness in the Novel: Conventions, Expectations and Reading Strategies," Ayres-Bennett, Wendy, and O'Donovan, Patrick, eds. *Syntax and the Literary System: New Approaches to the Interface between Literature and Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge French Colloquia, 1995), 152.

[40] Ernst, Ulrich. "The Figured Poem: Towards a Definition of a Genre," *Visible Language,* XX: 1 (1986), 9.

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[41] The term was used in the classification of "shaped writing" (as opposed to "framed writing") offered by Peter Mayer. Besides "solid forms" he also differentiates "outlines forms" and "distorted letters". See: Mayer, Peter. "Some Remarks Concerning the Classification of the Visual in Literature" *Dada/Surrealism*, 12 (1983), 5-13.

Besides linguistically complex visual compositions Iov produces a number of pieces with a minimalized verbal message, consisting of one word or just several Ukrainian letters. His compositions "Vaha miakoho znaka" ("The Weight of the Soft Sign," fig. 170) and "Vecherova abetka stepu" ("Evening Alphabet of the Steppe," fig. 171) are created in this vein. The former may be interpreted as a philosophical piece where the author's message is conveyed in a pictorial manner. The soft sign and the exclamation mark are employed as visual signs, standing for two different methods of communication: an ineffective method in a raised or commanding tone, and a far more effective method of speaking softly. In Iov's compositions the soft sign, which is used in Ukrainian (and Russian) orthography for marking the soft pronunciation of consonants, is associated with the idea of quietness rather than with its direct function of palatalization, thus acquiring a metaphorical meaning. For the reader unfamiliar with the Cyrillic alphabet and the specific function performed by the soft sign this may cause some interpretive discomfort. However, it does not prevent him from constructing for himself the aesthetic object within the offered textual and visual frame.

In this sense Iov's "Vecherova abetka stepu" is less resistant to interpretation, although it employs eight Ukrainian letters (actually, the last sign on the right side of the watermelon resembles more a tiny full moon than the Ukrainian O) and requires some basic knowledge of the cultural pattern. The stylized star constellations suggests the time of evening, while the depicted slice of the watermelon leads to the idea of the steppe through their sufficiently clear relationship suggesting a metonymic bias of the poem. In order to decode properly the author's experience as reflected in "Vecherova abetka stepu," the reader has to be aware of the fact that the Ukrainian steppe – a territory which is far from being rich in vegetation – is famous for its bountiful watermelon plantations. Without this knowledge it may be difficult to grasp the symbolic meaning of the watermelon slice in the poem as well as the basic mode of communication, exemplified by Iov's composition.

Among other visual poets who tend to a minimalistic usage of language, the works of Vasyl Trubai from the town of Obukhiv in Kyiv area and the Kyivites Mykola Soroka and Myroslav Korol present a special interest. In my opinion, it is too early to refer to the creative output of these poets as belonging to the same school, or to oppose the Kyiv school of visual writing to that of Lviv. Nevertheless, the works of these three practitioners manifest noticeable affinities in linguistic and nondiscursive resources and often in themes.

Vasyl Trubai's works in most cases have an apparent philosophical background, and in many of his visual compositions the author is preoccupied with the same ethical or moral issues which he successfully explores in his short stories and film scenarios. "Odne z p"iaty"[42] ("One Out of Five"), "Shyzofrenik"[43] ("Schizophrenic"), "Spokii"[44] ("Quiet"), "Liusterko"[45] ("The Looking-glass"), "Siamski blyzniuki"[46] ("Siamese Twins") are all very dense in meaning and intense in both discursive and nondiscursive means. "Odne z p"iaty" (Fig. 172) is structured as a page from a note-pad with four hand-written words, namely, *hroshi* ("money"), *vlada* ("power"), *slava* ("glory") and *kokhannia* ("love") crossed out as though thoughtfully selected. The only word left on the page is volia ("freedom"). The manner in which the words are stroked out suggests the order in which they were removed: *kokhannia* seems to be the last removal, while *vlada* resolutely crossed out by several lines, was most likely expunged first.

"Shyzofrenik" (Fig. 173) is shaped as a Pythagorean verse, a form named after its inventor, which graphically represented the letter Y, the latter being associated with the Pythagorean tree. As Soroka points out, the Pythagorean tree symbolically represents such categories as cosmos and life as well as the process of growing. This symbolic meaning of the form, transported by the visual image, is essential for understanding Pythagorean verse.[47] Trubai's poem has a humorous rather than symbolic meaning and in this sense it differs from the classical Pythagorean poem. Further deviation from the canon is noticeable in the structure itself. According to Mytrofan Dovhalevskyi, the classical Pythagorean verse, read from the bottom to the top, is split at the end into hexametric and pentametric lines.[48] Trubai's work digresses from the classical canon inasmuch as both its branches, springing from the same beginning, consist of three syllables and forming two words with diametrically opposed meanings: *obozhnyty* ("to deify") and *obhydyty* ("to defile").

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[42] Trubai, Vasyl. *Zhvaltuvannia relnosti* (Kyiv: n. p., 1997), n. pag.

[43] Trubai, n. pag.

[44] Trubai, n. pag.

[45] Trubai, n. pag.

[46] Trubai, n. pag.

Although "Siamski blyzniuki" (Fig. 174) seems to be written in a similar manner, this poem starts, nevertheless, from the top and reads downward, presenting two notions: *volia* ("freedom") and *dolia* ("fate"), which are inseparable in Trubai's interpretation. The composition "Kliuch" ("The Clue") is similar in its technique and design to the previously mentioned work: its merging words read as *dobro* and *zlo*, meaning the moral and philosophical categories of good and evil (Fig. 175).

The visual poem "Spokii" (Fig. 176) represents cross-shaped writing, known to Eastern Slavs from medieval times.[49] The composition begins at the centre with the letter k and reads in four directions, which differ in meaning: *kamin* ("fireplace"), *krislo* ("armchair"), *knyha* ("book") and *kava* ("coffee"), but at the same time each of them in combination with the other three can be identified as a symbol of homely cosiness and quiet. In "Liusterko" (Fig. 177) the mirrored images of words *kokhannia* ("love"), *muzyka* ("music") and *kvity* ("flowers") are reflected as *khlib* ("bread"), zhytlo ("dwelling") and *odiah* ("clothing"), thus exposing the eternal contradiction between spiritual aspirations and the prosaic reality of everyday needs.

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[47] Soroka, Mykola. *Zorova poeziia v ukrainskii literaturi kintsia XVI-XVIII st.* (Kyiv: Holovna spetsializovana redaktsiia literatury movamy narodiv natsionalnukh menshyn Ukrainy, 1997), 93.

[48] Dovholevskyi, Mytrofan. *Sad poetychnyi.* Trans. V.P.Masliuk (Kyiv: Mystetstvo; 1973), 282.

[49] See: Medyntseva, A. *Drevnerusskie nadpisi Novgorodskogo Sofievskogo Sobora* (Moscow: Nauka, 1978), 171, 296.

Of many Trubai's poems with strong philosophical or moral implications, "Zugzwang"[50] (Fig. 178) is especially worth examination. The title of the composition is a German term for a situation in chess when, according to the rules of the game, only one move is possible by the player. The work employs the traditional mythologyical motif of choice elaborated in a number of Eastern Slavic fairy tales. In general the utilization of folklore subjects and themes is not typical of visual poetry, which is informed by the complexities of modern reality rather than by the mythology of an ethnic heritage. In Trubai's interpretation the mythological motif of choice is transferred to the level of modernity and thus acquires existential meaning. As a rule, the hero of fairy tales at a certain moment of his ordeal comes to an open heath or crossroad where a large stone slab stands. On it is the carved inscription on it: "He who goes straight on shall suffer from hunger and cold; he who goes to the right shall be safe and sound, but his horse will perish; he who goes to the left shall be killed, but his horse will come to no harm."[51] On this mythological pattern Trubai creates the modern myth, and the poet's options for a contemporary human being are the following: "He who goes straight shall lose his mother; he who takes a step to the right, shall lose his beloved; he who turns back, shall betray his friend; he who turns to the left shall lose his children." The circle-shaped statement in the middle of the composition reads: "he who stands still shall perish." The existential choice of the modern hero is undoubtedly harder than that of the folklore character, inasmuch as the provided options prevent any painless decision. The mythological hero, as a rule, went to the right, reflecting that even if his horse was killed, he himself would remain alive."[52] The modern hero, however, does not have a horse to sacrifice. He has to lose a dear one – either to death or to unmerciful circumstances. The option which suggests the betrayal of the friend and which may be perceived as the least excruciating way in Western culture, is totally inappropriate in terms of the national code of behaviour or emotional attitude toward this particular aspect of human relations shared by large part of society. The personal conflict of the hero appears to be a social conflict as well, which makes the whole constructed situation even more complicated.

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[50] Vasyl Trubal. *Zhvaltuvannia realnosti*, n. pag.

[51] *Russian Folk Tales*. Trans. Natalie Duddington (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1967), 126.

[52] Russian Folk Tales, 126.

In his work on the semiotic study of mythology the Russian scholar D. Segal stresses:

> If we want to create a myth artificially – for instance, with electronic computers – which would not only be a myth in its own structure but could also be accepted as such by the members of some group, we must learn with which objects outside the myth its motifs and heroes are connected: we must construct a model not only of the myth's structure, but also of the world it models.[53]

This attempt to model the myth and the surrounding world is presented in Trubai's composition. Therefore in the reconstructed sociocultural system within which friendship is regarded as one of the most important values of human life, underestimation or negligence of this category's significance would definitely be perceived as a serious violation of moral and ethical principles which govern social behaviour. Besides, the betrayal of the friend actually means the betrayal of oneself. For this reason the resolution of the problem at the expense of friendship is not possible. Thus, the protagonist's situation has been transformed into a possibly lost endgame of the chess game, inasmuch as the moral dilemma seems incapable of any positive solution.

As for the negative – or undesirable solution – we should consider another work by the same author titled as "Kinets svitu"[54] ("The End of the World," fig. 179). The poems is structured as a footprint on the page from "Exodus," comprising the Ten Commandments, which are meant to be recognized at a quick glance rather than to be read. The author's moral attitude to this shocking happening is unequivocally reflected in the title.

The majority of Trubai's works are not rich in either textual or visual means. Even those which comprise at least several lines are not necessarily meant for close reading. In this sense "Osinnia akvarel" ("Autumn Watercolour," fig. 180) may serve as an example, although the text is not totally incomprehensible, the process of reading is seriously hampered by the washed-out contours of letters. Partially the same technique is applied to another composition entitled"Sliozy Iaroslavny" ("Tears of Iaroslavna," fig. 181). This textual piece is borrowed from the Kyivan anonymous epic poem of the late 12th century *Slovo o polku Ihorevi* (*The Tale of Ihor's Campaign*)[55] and the chosen fragment preserves the prereform orthography of the language.[56] The poem itself deals with the unsuccessful campaign by prince Ihor of Novhorod-Siverskyi against the Cumans in the spring of 1185. The "Lament of Iaroslavna,"[57] one section of the poem, is considered a fine example of the lament genre which is popular in the national folk poetry. Ukrainian laments are traditionally connected with funeral rites and presented in the form of a recitation which is emotionally emphasized by exclamations and appeals to the departed. In the framed quotation from *Slovo* Ihor's desperate wife, however, appeals to the river Dnipro, the principal river of Ukraine, with her sincere supplication for help. She does not know what has happened to her husband and asks the powerful river to put an end to her sufferings and to bring the prince home from the far-away land. In the epic poem Iaroslavna expresses her grief and sorrow orally, but in Trubai's composition her message is presented as already written and even printed (the author does not resort to a handwritten discourse) with the indented washed-out fragments suggestive of tears dropping on the page and thus damaging the writing. Thus the concept of lamenting as oral ritual is revalidated. The rite of lamentation is interpreted as an act of writing a spontaneous and private text, to a certain extent similar to the epistolary tradition, even if the addressee (the river Dnipro) is unusual.[58] The further resemblance between Iaroslavna's lament and a letter is suggested by the visible traces of tears on its surfaces, a cliché borrowed from the sentimental or romantic literary tradition. The fact that the poet wants to draw the reader's attention to the heroine tears is registered in the title "Sliozy Iaroslavny" as opposed to the original title of the chapter "Plach Iaroslavny" ("Iaroslavna's Lament"), which would be normally expected. Although the word *plach* also includes the meaning of weeping, the author's choice of word is by no means accidental: it juxtaposes the verbal and the pictorial levels of the composition. This gives further evidence to the poet's intention to reinterpret the whole story rather than to compose a semantic illustration of the well-known text in an unexpected and original manner.

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[53] Segal, D.M. "Problems in the Semiotic Study of Mythology," Lucid, Daniel P. Ed. and trans. *Soviet Semiotics: An Anthology.* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1977), 60.

[54] Vasyl Trubai. *Zhvaltuvannia realnosti*, n. pag.

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[55] Most editions of the last time (since 1812) and the scholarly debate in Russia and also in the West use the Russian form of the work, *Slovo o polku Igoreve* (*The Tale of Igor Campain*).

[56] The reform in orthography took place on the territory of the eventual Soviet Union soon after the October Revolution of 1917 and was aimed at overcoming the discrepancy between spelling and pronunciation. In Ukraine the situation was complicated by the orthographic differences existing between Russian-ruled territory and Western lands, formerly ruled by the Austrian empire. In January of 1919 the Orthographic Commission of the Ministry of Education of the Ukrainian National Republic introduced new orthographic rules. Several redundant letters were removed and the orthography was modernized. The new orthography was finally adopted in September of 1928 on the territory of Soviet Ukraine and 1929 in Western Ukraine as well as by Ukrainians outside the country. See: O. Horbach "Orthography," *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, Vol. III. Ed. Danylo Husar Struk (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 719.

[57] Anna Iaroslavna was prince Ihor's wife.

[58] According to Metropolitan Ilarion, Iaroslavna's appeal to the Sun, the Wind, and the River Dnipro suggests that "Plach Iaroslavny" fuses a "funeral lament with the invocation of natural forces." See:

"Sliozy Iaroslavny" is a relatively lengthy text among other visual pieces by Trubai. It is meant for quick scanning rather than for reading. The text's familiarity supports this view. "Plach Iaroslavny" is a well-known poetic piece which was discussed and learnt by heart by many generations of Ukrainian students ( also by Russian and Belarusian) as part of the compulsory literature program at school. Many Ukrainians in the diaspora are also familiar with this piece. They would therefore grasp the poem's idea immediately. For the reader who has never been previously exposed to this particular text its comprehension may present a certain problem since several words are washed-out and thus hardly recognizable. The same tendency towards production of longer texts which are to be scanned rather than read is evident in other works of the author, namely "Kinets svitu" ("The End of the World"), "Muky tvorchosti" ("Throes of Creation," fig. 182), in which the paradigm of the Proteus poem is employed, "Soroka-vorona" ("Magpie-Crow," fig. 183) based on lexico-grammatical repetition, and others.

In contrast, Trubai's shorter or verbally minimal compositions in most cases require a reading of the text, which may comprise just one or two words. Such a terse discursive component in most cases is not sufficient to decode the poet's message, and graphic or pictorial means become a more direct way of representing the author's idea, which may be incommunicable or partially communicable by the text itself. Consequently, the semantic accent is shifted from the verbal to the visual devices (the most common being non-traditional

Mytropolyt Ilarion *Dokhrystylanski viruvannia ukrainskoho narodu* (Winnipeg: Research Institute ofVolhyn, 1981), 191.

typography, arrangement of letters, and a meticulous positioning) which assist the reader in the comprehension of the work. Therefore, in the linear verbal chain (whether vertical or horizontal) each letter is a unit which simultaneously belongs to a visual chain. However, the roles of individual letters in the formation of the visual image are not identical. In the composition "Avto-stop"[59] ("Hitch-hiking," Fig. 184) the opposition "I" :: "the other" is signified grammatically by the shift from the third person singular of the verb *ikhaty* ("to ride") – "he or she rides" – to the first person singular – "I ride"; visually it is realised, however, through the change in the letter size. Letter size also opens up the chronology of the described event – by rushing cars approaching and passing the hitch-hiker on the road. In the final, third line the succession of the same size letters indicates the hitch-hiker's successful attempt to stop the car and to receive a ride. In "Duel" ("Duel," fig. 185), the enlarged initial and the final letters symbolize the duellists, although they are neither distorted in a pictorial fashion nor anthropomophized in any other way, as is characteristic for many visual compositions of the Canadian author of Ukrainian descent Jars Balan.

Trubai's work "Oda Bakhusu" ("Ode to Bacchus," fig. 186) is a relatively lengthy rhymed poem, where, nonetheless, the technique, which is typically employed in his verbally minimal compositions, is successfully applied in this more lengthy one. The textual message reads:

> Drunk I am wading home from the party
> Where I drank aqua vitae just like water,
> Now I don't ca'are a bit for anybody
> And I am composing an ode to Bacchus
> My soul is elated
> By Calvados and Madeira
> If I happened to se'ee Venus
> I would .. her, her... would ... I

The very last line is ambiguous in the Ukrainian original as the poet hints at the character's resorting to vulgar vocabulary before losing his balance and falling down – the very last letter

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[59] Vasyl Trubai. *Zhvaltuvannia realnosti,* n. pag.

*Ia* in a bold typeset corresponding to the personal pronoun "I" undoubtedly suggests such an end to the drunk odyssey. The apostrophes and inserted letters (which are unmotivated grammatically) in the third and seventh lines are also noteworthy as they reconstruct the speech peculiarity of a hiccuping drunkard coping with words. Judging from these peculiarities of textual organization each letter appears to perform a dual function. As a purely visual means, it is used for drawing the drunkard's path, inasmuch as the jagged lines symbolize the uneven gait of the drunkard returning from the party, but simultaneously each letter serves as the smallest orthographic symbol representing a phoneme of a given language in the peculiar idiolect of the boozy narrator.

The duality of a sign is one of the essential characteristics of visual poetry, whether the sign is understood as a word, or expression, or a letter which signifies other things. As Willard Bohn observes, in visual poetry

> the linguistic sign, which constitutes a complete system in itself, functions as the first term of the visual sign, which expands to encompass a second signified at the visual level. In this manner the written word serves as the support for the visual message.[60]

The problem of relating the visual message to the verbal is controversial and, as a rule, is in compositions that have a richer textual component. However, even in the case of seemingly non-sophisticated works the relationship between two sets of signifieds and signifiers is not necessarily simple.

The creative output of the two Kyivan visual practitioners Mykola Soroka and Myroslav Korol gives evidence to this. Both poets tend to create thematic cycles of visual poetry in which an individual poem as a "letter-oriented" more than "text-oriented" composition becomes a visual poem.[61] Soroka's works appear in two publications *Shche ne vmerla Ukraina. . .* (*Ukraine still lives on. . .*) published in London in 1994, and the collection *Zorovi poezii*

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[60] Bohn, Williard. *The Aesthetics of Visual Poetry* (Cambridge, London, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 5.

[61] This distinction was made by Dick Higgins in his work "The Strategy of Visual Poetry," Kostelanetz, Richards, ed. *Visual Literature Criticism* (Carbondale and Eduardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), 44.

(*Visual poems*), dedicated to the international conference on visual poetry "Eye Rhymes" held in Edmonton on 12-16 June, 1997. His second book also includes works from the first collection. Soroka regularly contributes to Ukrainian journals and newspapers. Korol's visual pieces often appear in Ukrainian mass media and his first book of visual poetry is about to be published in Ukraine. He also designs and illustrates musical and poetic texts, including collections of visual poetry. The thematic range of subjects explored by both practitioners is very wide, and they should also be mentioned as the most critical visual practitioners of the time, whose works are often created on the boundary of visual poetry and political cartoon. Soroka authored the political cycle of nine poems on topical subjects pertaining to the current Ukrainian reality. The majority of them are compositions with limited visual means and very brief verbal messages.

The arrangement and size of letters, as well as the typography are the main non-discursive devices employed by the poet, and they may be further involved in letter or word games. In an untitled poem[62] (Fig. 187) segmentation of the name of the country – *Ukraina* – is attempted and the component *rai* meaning "paradise" is singled out and emphasized by enlarged bold typeset and circular framing. On the verbal level this morphemic manipulation may have a dual connotation: an ironic one, if the current economical situation, frustrating for many citizens of the country, is to be taken into account; and a literal one, since the picturesque, if not scenically fabulous Ukrainian land, fertile and rich in vegetation, and also blessed by a mild pleasant climate, has frequently been referred to as a paradise on earth. Which interpretation is preferable is to be decided by the reader, and the basis for such a decision obviously depends on the current situation in the country, as well as on the reader's immersion in or remoteness from the Ukrainian reality. The majority of Ukrainian citizens will show a preference for the ironic meaning; while many Ukrainians from the diaspora, especially those who have left the country as children and nurture sweet nostalgic recollections about their native land most probably will prefer the second interpretation. The ambiguity of the poem's meaning seems arbitrary inasmuch as it is dependant on a mutable category, the meaning of which is affected by changes in time. If the given situation in Ukraine changes radically and quickly for the better, the ironic meaning of the work could be lost in favour of a more positive reading of the message. It is also possible that changes may affect the signified concept in a more radical way, and the bond between the idea and its expression may be loosened, or a new, unpredictable meaning may emerge. This potential mutability of meaning is characteristic of many politically and socially committed works which deal with topical material.

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[62] Soroka, Mykola. *Zorovi poezii* (Kyiv: n. p., 1997), n. pag.

Another poem titled as "Shche ne vmerla Ukraina..."[63] ("Ukraine still lives on . . . ," which is the initial phrase of the national anthem, fig. 188) reflects a similarly unstable situation, namely, the political struggle over the question of official language status between the pro-Russian population and conscientious Ukrainian citizens. There is no difficulty seeing this composition as politically committed work. The essence of the conflict on both a discursive and graphical level is the collision between Ukrainian and Russian spellings of the name of the country (which differs in one letter) related to a wider issue of state language policy, of monolingualism vs. bilingualism, fervently discussed at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. Visually, the conflict is signalled by interrupting the linear progression of the poem: having stumbled against the disorderly pile of interacting letters *i* and *y* the reader's eye has to stop. Nonetheless, it is the textual conflict which brings about the visual one and includes the latter into its scope.

The composition "P"iata kolona"[64] ("The Fifth column," fig. 189) from the same cycle shows thematic affinity to the previously analyzed piece. The work is structured as a ten line gridlike composition in which the first four columns consist of the Ukrainian letter *ie* while the fifth column presents a vertical succession of the letter of the Russian alphabet which corresponds to the sound *e*. It is worth noting that two letters stand for different sounds as the Ukrainian *ie* is an iotized vowel. The sound identical to the one graphically expressed by the Russian *e* also exists in the Ukrainian alphabet, but there is no reference to it in the poem. Unlike the previous pieces, this work is composed as a visual metaphor of the trite verbal metaphor "fifth column" meaning any group of hostile infiltrators or an enemy in one's midst.

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[63] Soroka, n. pag.

[64] Soroka, n. pag.

In Soroka's piece the metaphorical meaning of the expression used as a title is exemplified literally on the visual level by the attempted letter arrangement.

In general, such visualization of verbal metaphors is not very common in Soroka's compositions, in which the relations between the visual and the verbal messages are not so direct. In his logo-like poem "Dynamika XX st."[65] ("Dynamics of the XXth Century," fig. 190) the poet reinterprets and reconstructs one unit of communication, which is semantically neutral, into another one with a strong emotive connotation. The initial composition *XX CT* does not convey any specific or marked information, since it means "the 20th century" in Ukrainian. However, its structural elements, rearranged in different fashion – the combination of two sepulchral crosses combined with the sickle and the hammer, the latter being the well-known symbol of Soviet power and the central element of the coat-of-arms of the Soviet Union – acquires new and ominous meaning which is related to the initial one, inasmuch as the 20th century and especially seventy three years of Soviet rule were a long-lasting period of national opposition for the Ukrainian nation. The logical correlation between these two notions is apparent and visually indicated by the arrow, which functions as a vector of meaning.[66] The rearrangement of the smallest structural elements of the unit and a shift in relationship between them results in a radical shift of meaning. The neutral data is turned into the verdict of guilty brought against the totalitarian Soviet system. Unlike many works of explicit political commitment "Dynamika XX st" may be regarded as a piece with immutable semantics, at least in the framework of the existing socio-political reality.

More than one visual practitioner has created a composition which reflects the author's meditation on the history of Ukraine and its place in the world community; many of these works are not focused directly on nationalistic or political issues. For Mykola Soroka Ukraine is a direct successor of the Kyivan Rus,[67] as his untitled work suggests (Fig. 191). The temporal opposition of past and present is realized through the usage of the various typesets. The letters of the word Rus are borrowed from the Church Slavonic typeset, typically used in old manuscripts, but the name *Ukraina* is printed in one of the modern scripts. Myroslav Korol graphically suggests that Ukraine is bound to both Europe and Asia (Fig. 192). But his text does not bisect the word *Ievropaziia* ("Europeasia"), which is invented by the author, because Ukraine is not truly on the border of the two continents. In this composition both words are spelled with the Latin letter "r," and such a small-scaled macaronism probably alludes to Panfuturist endeavours of internationalizing the Ukrainian language, or perhaps also to the presence of Western elements in Ukrainian culture (i.e., Polish and Roman Catholic in the Greek-Catholic Church, etc.). The Reverend Mykola Sarma-Sokolovskyi's Ukraine symbolically represents Ukraine in the form of a fragile and highly decorative Pysanka or an Easter egg, which in pre-Christian time was an important element in spring rituals of sun-worship by the people, and later was transferred to the Christian Easter ceremony of Ukrainians. As the text states, *Ukraina – velukodnia pysanka, samym Bohom pysana* ("Ukraine is an Easter egg decorated by God himself," fig. 193). For this reason the author calls for his countrymen to protect Ukraine from enemies and not to break it themselves. Unfortunately, the layout and design of the work does not reflect the author's true intention. As a rule, the Reverend Sarma-Sokolovsky invents and conceptualizes his works, as well as provides them with the textual material and a detailed description of the configuration and other visual aspects of his composition as he sees it in his mind's eye. As for the technical realization of his ideas he has to rely on professional artists, inasmuch as he is unable to draw the composition by himself due to his disability and declining years. In a letter to the author of the present study, he expresses his deep concern for the incongruity of the existing design of his composition "Pysanka" and his creative intention. As he wrote, "the artists put around real flies instead of the Easter egg's ornamentation."[68] For this reason "Pysanka" is presented with partially preserved ornamentation on the bottom of the egg-shaped form, where the ornamental flowers do not particularly resemble insects.

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[65] Soroka, n. pag.

[66] Essary, Loris. "On Language and Visual Language," Kostelanetz, Richard, ed. *Visual Literature Criticism*, 97.

[67] Soroka, Mykola. *Zorovi poezii*, n. pag.

The Reverend Mykola Sarma-Sokolovskyi's works usually have a strong symbolic and philosophical import and many of them are anchored in the history of Ukraine. This is by no means accidental. For the former political prisoner the creation of visual compositions is another means of struggling with "the Northern invader,"[69] i.e., Russia. For this reason he lays great stress on the content of his pattern poems which belong to the category of *littérature engagé*. The poet considers that literature, including visual poetry, should not be mere amusement but should aim at the production of significant works, which can contribute to the development of the national literature and be effective ideological weapons. The majority of his works are composed as solid shaped poems, whose forms graphically supplement or duplicate their meaning. The cross-shaped solid form "Kobzariam Koliivshchyny"[70] (To Kobzars of Koliivshuchyna," fig. 194) is dedicated to the murdered Ukrainian singers, or kobzars, who actively participated in the Koliivshchyna rebellion of 1768, when Ukrainian Cossaks responded to Polish suppression of Ukrainian peasants. The poem itself is a sort of symbolic cross on their anonymous graves by their progeny. "Dzvin Hetmana Ivana Mazepy"[71] ("The Bell of Hetman Ivan Mazepa," fig. 195) is configured as a bell, which is a lyrical homodiegetic narrator of his sad story. "Naiserdechnishe sertse"[72] (The Most Heart-felt Heart," fig. 196) is quite predictably shaped as a heart, and "Vitriak" ("The Mill," fig. 197) exploits the same compositional principle.

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[68] Sarma-Sokolovskyi, Mykola, o. Letter to the author of June 30, 1997.

It would be an exaggeration to view Father Mykola's pattern poems as highly innovative in technique. Nonetheless, his persistent and enthusiastic exploration of the classical canons of Ukrainian visual writing is not devoid of aesthetic findings, important for the progress of the genre which has been marginalized and underestimated in the national literature for a long period. Not every individual work can be a masterpiece, whether in visual poetry, conventional poetry or any other type of art and literature. Even if not all visual practitioners offer brilliant or truly original solutions to aesthetic problems raised by the application of the principles of painting or drawing to poetry, their search for them is promising and interesting.

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[69] Sarma-Sokolovskyi, Letter

[70] Sarma-Sokolovskyi, Mykola. *Korinnia pamiati* (Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo imeni Oleny Telihy, 1997), 104.

[71] Sarma-Sokolovskyi, 100.

[72] Sarma-Sokolovskyi, 192.

Unfortunately, many literary critics can neither realize this nor respond appropriately to the acquisitions of the genre, mainly due to their own unawareness of specific features of the form. They share previousy quoted opinion of M. L. Gasparov, a recognized expert in versification, on the limitations of the devices of visual poetry and general hopelessness of such creative endeavour.[73] Regarding the problem of the limited range of artistic devices used by visual poetry, it would be relevant to admit that certain types of pattern poems, based on what I would call classical patterns of shaped texts, known from antiquity, medieval or Baroque times (like those of the compositions of Reverend Mykola Sarma-Sokolovskyi) are in most cases limited to basically the same configurational models, like a heart, or a cross. However, it would not be correct to apply these notions to the whole genre of visual poetry. In addition, even well-known graphic forms may reveal some new aspects of their implied or symbolic meaning. In Myroslav Korol's "Petro" ("Peter," fig. 198) from his sacred cycle "Amen," the figure of the cross, which traditionally symbolises the Christian faith, is used in the capacity of the letter *t* in the name of the apostle Peter, and its stone basis further alludes to the name of Christ's favourite disciple. The well-known triangular abraxas attributed to Serenus Samonicus (2nd century A.D.) (Fig. 199) inspired Korol in the creation of his own version of this "disappearing poem." Korol's composition is clearly a parody of the magic text, inasmuch as the author links the notion *abracadabra* (meaning "gibberish," "nonsense") with the *avanhard* ("avant-garde") of which he is a representative (Fig. 200).

Speaking about the continuity of the visual writing tradition and the possibility of innovation within its framework, one should keep in mind that repetition of basic forms (which not infrequently occurs in the long history of genre evolution) may lead not only to variants impregnated by new contextual meanings, but also to the reinvention of well-forgotten subforms and their further revitalization. One of the examples is the Ukrainian visual practitioners' play on the dual nature of Old Cyrillic letters. It is worth mentioning that certain Old Church Slavonic letters had numerical, as well as semantic meaning. The numerical values of the Cyrillic letters were the same as those of the correspondent letters of the Byzantine

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[73] Gasparov, M. L. A *History of European Versification*. Tr. G.S. Smith and Marina Tarlinskaja. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 292.

Greek alphabet.[74] Letters which indicated specifically Slavic sounds and did not have counterparts in the Byzantine Greek alphabet, never performed this subsidiary function.[75] In the text letters with numerical meaning were marked by special superlinear signs, titlos or tildes, which could also indicate the abbreviation of a word. Numerals indicated by letters with a titlo above were used in religious literature until the language reform of 1708 ordered by Peter the Great.

The first Ukrainian poet who used Cyrillic letters to indicate the date in poetry was Ivan Vekychkovskyi. The chronogram "As mlekom pitala" (Fig. 201)[76] opens his book *Mleko* and anacrostically indicates the year of publication – 1691. Chronogramic poetry, however, was neither popular nor prolific in Baroque Ukraine. Probably at that time manipulation with numerical letters was considered to be quite a simple and non-sophisticated skill, easily attainable for educated people, or at least for the clergy, who were the principal creators of poetry. The tradition of chronogramic poetry is now continued by the Kyivan graphic artist Volkhv Slovovezha. In his poems the literal numerals are presented in bold type-face or printed in black, simultaneously serving as regular Ukrainian letters (often stylized) in the text. As a rule, Volkhv Slovovezha's compositions require deciphering, which can be a time-consuming process, inasmuch as the numeric meanings of Old Cyrillic letters is not well understood nowadays. For this reason they are perceived as cryptographic pieces, although this is not the case. In the composition *Boha pro sim k prosymo viky* ("We Have Been Asking God for Centuries," fig. 202) the letter *k* with the superlinear titlo stands for 20, thus indicating in an enigmatic manner the length of the period of supplications to God. Also the multiplication of the written number *sim* ("seven") by twenty results in astronomical cycles of 140. The same number is indicated by the letters *B* (2) and *O* (70) in the composition *Vse Bozhe ie shcho dib Bozhyie* ("Everything is God's, Even Night and Day," fig. 203) in which literal numbers are also used as conventional symbols of writing.

Chronograms are not the sole Baroque genre successfully revitalized and modernized by contemporary visual practitioners. Myrola Soroka composed a rhymed square poem in which the reading should start from the top left corner and proceed clockwise in a spiral-manner: *Doshka nashe zhyttia / poruch udacha i smutok / chorni i bili polia / ne zmozhe nikhto obmynuty* ("The board is our life / success and failure are close / nobody will pass over / black and white fields," fig. 204).[77] "The board of life" is apparently suggests a chess-board, which is a pictorial framework for the entire composition. Myroslav Korol composed the spiral-shaped labyrinth, read clockwise from the centre: *Spiral rokiv na zrub stolit – spokonvichna pechatka nashzhadkam* ("The spiral of years on the cross-section of centuries is the eternal seal for our offsping" (Fig. 205). The verbal message of the composition is duplicated on the pictorial level with great accuracy, inasmuch as the text is written on a cross-section of a stylized tree, which simultaneously resembles an old-fashioned seal. Both compositions have a unidirectional reading path.

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[74] Khabyrhaev, G.A. *Staroslavianskii iazyk* (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1974), 29.

[75] Malboroda, A.V. *Staroslov"ianska mova* (Kyiv: Vyzhcha shkola, 1975), 35.

[76] Velychkovskyi, Ivan. *Tvory* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1972), 69.

The Lviv-based visualist Nazar Honchar revitalises the genre of musical rebuses; his graphic notations synthesize music, graphics and the text; and musical notations compose meaningful phrases or words by the conventional names of notes. Musical notations may also be accompanied by conventional poetic stanzas (Fig. 206). The sequence of notes *do si si re mi fa sol do* makes a line "quite grey (is) the soldo (i.e. saldo) of the myth." The second line of this musical composition is read on the verbal level as *dolia, dolia, dolia, dolia* that means "fate, fate, fate, fate," thus using repetition, one of the most important principles of musical structure, as an emphatic device. Besides being puzzle poems, Honchar's compositions are music *per se*, which may be played, however brief and unsophisticated the pieces may be. The title pun of another of his works, "Idle theatre," suggests a fusion of theatre and word-game poetry (Fig. 207). At the top of the composition, phonetic paronomasia is employed in words and word combinations in English "idle"/"idol"/I'd'll and "theatre"/the art" to designate conceptual ambiguity. Visual ambiguity is achieved by the amalgamation of the capital letters "I" and "T," which strongly suggest the cross of the telescopic sight, although "possible associations with other crosses also have to be considered,"[78] as the poet insists. Lettristic variations on the theatre theme compose the word "eye" at the top of the composition, thus stressing the significance of visual perception. The Ukrainian part of the composition utilises another word play technique, besides providing insight into the contextual meaning of the verbal message. At the visual level two parallel words *nema* ("there is (are) not") with vertical letter arrangement stand for theatre wings. Either of them is placed above the logo of the theatre, which reads *Teatr Ledachoi Istoty* ("idle theatre").[79] Specific word arrangement of the theatre logo forms the Ukrainian letter *ie,* which stands for one-letter word corresponding to the present tense of the verb "to be" for all persons, and in this particular context may be rendered as "there is." Besides, three initial capital letters *TLI* together with the letter *ie* constitute another Ukrainian word, *tlie,* which means "[it] is decaying." Therefore, the entire verbal message is confusing: on the one hand, there is no idle theatre, but on the other, there is, although it is decaying. Between the two logos of the theatre the anagram of the author's name forms the word combination *hra znarochna* with the meaning of "intended play. Visually the two-lined anagram resembles the equality sign, suggesting that the "intended play" is the rational inner essence of the poet.[80] Further elaboration of the concept of "intended play" results in fanciful constructions of various textual configurations and various forms of play on the signifier or signified under the same auspices of the "Idle Theatre." As the poet reports, this play is "structurally based on the alteration / union, synchronization of the fixed / balloted / improvised effect / ascertaining / disregard for philological 'tricks' and other conceptual 'whims.'"[81]

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[77] Soroka Mykola. *Zorovi poezii*, n. pag.

[78] Letter to the author, n. d., 1997

Roman Sadlovskyi's chimerical letter configurations in a certain sense suggestive of the possibility of composing meaningful words out of structural elements, which are often arranged symmetrically, and may be viewed as puzzle or riddle poems as well. Sadlovskyi's compositions do not lose their visual character even when they are solved, and for this reason should be reckoned among pieces of visual writing (Fig. 208-209). Some of his works have a palindromic nature, but the majority of his configurations are meant for unhurried deciphering rather than for reading whether in conventional or reverse manner (Fig. 210-211). The last two letter compositions belong to the corpus of works, in which the name of the avant-garde poetic group "Luhosad" (which is the acronymic formation arrived at by the reduction of the originators' last name to their first syllables)[82] founded by Ivan Luchuk, Nazar Honchar and Roman Sadlovskyi, is played upon.

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[79] As Honchar explains in his letter to the author, the Ukrainian expression *teatr ledachoi istoty* should be translated as "idly theatre" rather than "the theatre of an idly creature," inasmuch as he uses the Ukrainian noun *istota* in the meaning of "essence," not of "creature." Letter, n. d., 1996.

[80] The Reverend Pavel Florenskii's concept of the name as the essence of a human being and his alter ego, briefly discussed in the previous chapter, seems instrumental for interpreting Honchar's linguistic and visual playfulness.

[81] Honchar, Nazar. Comments to the visual poem "Teatr ledachoi istoty" attached to the letter to organizers of Eye Rhymes Conference of June 11, 1997.

"Chess poetry," developed (if not invented) by Kyivan Anatolii Moisiienko does not seem to have an analogous form in visual poetry of previous times, although chessboard verse labyritns (in which reading paths were similar to chess moves) were known to Spanish and Portuguese Baroque literature.[83] In a strict sense Moisiienko's chess compositions can hardly be considered visual poetry. However, he is not the only Ukrainian practitioner whose visual compositions allude to the chess game, and previously discussed works by Trubai ("Zugzwang") and Soroka ("The Board is Our Life") attest to this. Moisiienko, however, has gone further than his colleagues as far as the integration of the chess component into poetic discourse is concerned. For this reason just a brief comment on Moisiienko's chess poetry will be relevant for my study. The record of chess gambits found in this type of writing can be either incorporated in the textual body of the poems or added as a supplement beneath chess diagrams. But in any case these diagrams serve as illustrations to the discursive material, rather than structural elements of any autonomous meaning. Just one example may throw light on Moisiienko's principles of chess versification (Fig. 212) The work[84] reads:

| | |
|---|---|
| Pity | To go |
| 1.T: e3? | 1.T: e3? |
| Chy | Or |

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[82] For more detailed information regarding the group "Lyhosad" see: Luchuk, Taras. "Literaturnyi ar"iergard," *Suchasnist,* 12 (1993), 15-17.

[83] Hatherly, Ana. "Reading Paths in Spanish and Portuguese Baroque Labyrinth," *Visible Languges,* XX:1 (1986), 53.

[84] Moisiienko, Anatolii. *Shakho Poeziia* (Paris; Lvov; Zwickau: Zerna, 1997), 32-33.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1.K: e3! | 1.K: e3! |
| Shchob povernutysia | In order to return |
| Na kryhi svoia: | To the source |
| 2.Te4x, | 2.Te4x, |
| 2.Ked5x | 2.Ked5x |
| I shchob inshomu | And for another |
| Zabraklo syl | Not to have enough strength |
| Povernutysia | To return. |

The diagram of the checkmate is attached to this text by way of illustration.

At we can see, not all Ukrainian visual poets create linguistically sophisticated and extended texts, and many forms of visual poetry are based on minimal or condensed forms of verbal expression. But even brief and verbally unambiguous works may engage the reader into a further quest for meaning or manipulation. Soroka's visual poem "Erotychna poeziia"[85] ("Erotic Poem," fig. 213) from the cycle "Zhinka" ("A Woman"), which reads *Ia liubliu vidpochyvaty bilia dvokh khvyl tvoho moria osoblyvo koly vono nespokiine* ("I love resting near two waves of your sea especially when it is anxious" was parodied by Viktor Melnyk, whose composition "Duzhe erotychna poeziia" ("Very Erotic Poem," fig. 214) presents two joined semicircles, wider than those on Soroka's poetry, which render the message *Ia liubliu vidpochyvaty bilia dvokh khvyl tvoho moria osoblyvo koly ty perekyneshsia na zhyvit* ("I love resting near the waves of your sea especially when you turn on your stomach").[86] One of Melnyk's recent collections of poems, *Brattia vo khvosti* (*Brothers in Tail* analogues with "Brethren in Christ") include a whole chapter of parodies on visual poetry entitled "Smiites ochi, smiites, bachyly, shcho kupuvaly" ("Laugh, Eyes, Laugh: You Saw What You Were Buying"), in which works of the most well-known Ukrainian practitioners are parodied, and some in a very harsh, if not biased manner. The parodies themselves, however, are witty and intelligent. It seems truly astounding that Melnyk parodies even his own work "Nich z nehrytiankoiu"[87] ("A Night With a Black Woman," fig. 215), and does so without showing much concern for the 'appropriate' treatment of the sexual relationship, which is typically exemplified by other Ukrainian male literati, who are nurtured and influenced by male chauvinist ideology, popular in Ukraine and other post-Soviet countries. Irrespective of its aesthetic properties (which are to par), Melnyk's autoparody "Nich z snizhnoiu korolevoiu"[88] ("A Night With a Snow Queen," fig. 216) should be praised as an exceptional work in contemporary Ukrainian writing, in which the male libido is treated with explicit irony[89] at both the verbal and the visual levels.

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[85] Soroka, Mykola. *Zorova poeziia,* n. pag.

[86] Melnyk, Viktor. *Brattia vo khvosti* (Kyiv: n. p., 1997), 19.

Melnyk's parodies reveal conceptual, linguistic and pictorial discrepancies of the parodied texts. As a rule, it is the discursive rather than iconic inconsistency which is the starting point for the author's ironic or comical twisting. Nonetheless, in his parody on Neda Nezhdana's "Piskovyi hodynnyk," entitled "Znaishovsia vykhod"[90] ("A Solution Has Been Found," fig. 217) it is the contradiction between the notion of the hour-glass and its pictorial embodiment, which triggers mocking imitation. According to the poet, in Nezhdana's poem the hour-glass is depicted full to the brim, which does not leave enough room for the sand to trickle to one chamber from the other.[91] In his work the parodist resorts to a combination of both the outlined and solid form of shaped writing, thus depicting the hour-glass with a higher degree of iconic accuracy. On the textual level Melnyk's parody mocks stylistic blunders of the original work, and its caustic witticism can hardly be viewed as impartial.

Even more apparent personal antagonism is vented in the parody of Iov's pattern poem also shaped as the hour-glass. Melnyk's imitation is based on parodying Iov's choice of words, inasmuch as the poet uses the verb *teche* ("flows" or "pours") instead of *sypetsia* ("trickle"), which is probably more appropriate in this particular context, although Iov's choice is not unjustified either, given that the verb *tekty* ("to flow" or "to pour") may have various cognitive and conceptual meanings in Ukrainian. Notwithstanding, Iov's hourglass has been transformed into the wine glass alluding to a container for pouring liquids and simultaneously to a drinking vessel, and consequently the parody receives its unequivocal title "Merylo zhyttia"[92] ("The Measure of Life," fig. 218). Not surprisingly, Ivan Iov was not long without an answer and in his turn parodied Melnyk's parody in his "Modificato: Balada pro vitriak"[93] ("Modificato: The Ballad of the Mill"), in which he played on the semantics of Melnyk's last name, which means "miller" in Ukrainian in the same biting if not extremely hostile manner.

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[87] Melnyk, Viktor. *Vyshuky* (Khmelnytskyi: Dolia, 1992), 24.

[88] Melnyk, Viktor. *Brattia vo khvosti*, 22.

[89] In his letter of April 6, 1998 the poet hastens to clarify that his selfparody deals with a fictitious performance of a fictitious character, and thus by no means can be related to its author.

[90] Melnyk, Viktor. *Brattia vo khvosti*, 17.

[91] Melnyk, Viktor. Letter of April 6, 1998.

An interesting example of parodying the parody[94] is Melnyk's composition "Aktualne vydyvo"[95] ("The Actual Vision, fig. 219). Melnyk's work parodies Mykola Miroshnychenko's parody "Fontan"[96] ("The Fountain," fig. 220) on Apollinaire's calligram "La Colombe Poignardée et le Jet d'Eau"[97] ("The Stabbed Dove and the Fountain," fig. 221). The French poet's imagery evokes melancholic and sorrowful emotions, since the author recalls the names of his pre-war loves, and mourns his lost friends enlisted in the army. The motif of sadness is introduced in the initial part of the calligram, specifically in the lines shaped as the fanning of the dove's tail, when the author remarks that the fountain "weeps and prays." The lines making up the fountain reinforce this feeling by repetitive inquiry concerning the whereabouts of the poet's friends, all being well-known artists or men of letters: "Where have Braque and Max Jacob gone," "Where Billy, Raynal, Dalize," "Where is Cremnitz." As the poet states *de souvenirs mon âme est pleine / d'eau pleure sur ma peine* ("my soul is full of memories /

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[92] Melnyk, Viktor. *Brattia vo khvosti*, 16.

[93] Iov, Ivan. *Periodychna systema sliv*, 112.

[94] According to Melnyk (his letter of April 6, 1998), Miroshnychenko's *Aktualne vydyvo* is not a parody, but an allusion on Apollinaire's well-known calligram. The generic identification is a matter of interpretation. In my opinion, Miroshnychenko's work demonstrates dominant comic properties, which imminently exclude it from the corpus of pastiches or allusions.

[95] Melnyk, Viktor. *Brattia vo khvosti*, 13.

[96] Miroshnychenko, Mykola. *Oko*, 78.

[97] Apollinaire, Guillaume. *Calligrams: Poems of Peace and War (1913-1916)*. Trans. Anne Hyde Greet (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1980), 122-123.

fountain weep for my sorrows"), which is intertextually related to the well-known poem by François Villon, "Le Grand Testament," with a similar litany of questions about famous ladies and prominent men of the past. According to Anne Hyde Greet "the collapse zof each spray of water into the pool assumes particularly sombre implications," inasmuch as "water, whether stagnant or flowing, has associations with death throughout Apollinaire's poetry."[98]

This particular implication is not preserved in either of the parodies. Nor does the war theme emerge in either of the works. Miroshnychenko does not refer to water sprays on the verbal level at all, although the design presents them or, rather, water flashes of the fountain. In Melnyk's work curved lines which verbally describe "bright white jets of water, resilient as the air's ribs" outline the pictorial shape of the skeleton of the dove. The motif of sorrow and loss appears neither on discursive nor on pictorial levels in both compositions. Conversely, whatever the poets' intentions, the parodies have explicit ironic, if not mocking, mood. Miroshnychenko's "Fontan" seems to parody just the title of Apollinaire's calligram rather than striking interaction between the emotionally intense text and sensitive pictorial form achieved in the work of the French poet. Therefore Miroshnychenko's work is shaped as a fountain without a dove, because, as is stated in the footnote, Apollinaire had this dove for his breakfast on Thursday. The theme continues in Melnyk's parody, inasmuch as the line which correspond to the dove's right leg and the two horizontal lines of which read *Holodnyi, dyvlius na skeletyk holubky, iakoiu v chetver bez mene posnidav Apolliner*[99] ("Hungry, I am looking at the skeleton of the dove which Apollinaire's had for breakfast on Thursday without sharing it with me." Melnyk also suggests an alternative variant of this phrase, since its reading may begin from the left leg of the dove's skeleton which is formed by the words *fontan* ("the fountain") and *i vvyzhaletsia*, the latter can be rendered as "I imagine ..." or "I am haunted by..."). Thus the occurrence on which Miroshnychenko focuses his parody is interpreted as ambiguous and probably imaginary event, belonging to the realm of blurry fantasy, as if in sharp contrast with its title "Aktualne vydyvo" ("The Actual Vision").

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[98] Greet, Anne Hyde. "Comments." Apollinaire, Guillaume. *Calligrams: Poems of Peace and War (1913-1916)*, 410.

[99] Melnyk, Viktor. *Brattia vo khvosti*, 13.

One of the few examples of visual pastiche in contemporary Ukrainian visual poetry is Mykola Soroka's "Moia kablepoema druzhyni"[100] ("Cablepoem to My Wife, fig. 222) structurally modelled on the first card of Semenko's "Cablepoema za okean" ("Cablepoem Across the Ocean," fig. 48), a composite unit, which consists of eight separate cards, each delivering dynamic and revolutionary Panfuturist messages throughout the world. In preserving the general design, architectonic appearance and lined dispatch of Semenko's pattern Soroka has radically changed its content. Instead of manifesting proletarian solidarity with artists and writers of other countries and continents, Soroka leads the reader through the lyrical narrative of his personal feelings as well as his brief recollections on the flight across the Atlantic ocean. He does not send his message to *vsim – vsim – vsim* ("everyone – everyone – everyone"), as Semenko does, but clearly names his addressee by naming her three times; once directly, once in an acrostic arrangement of bold letters on the right panel of the poem, and once in English transliteration at the bottom right corner. Instead of the global communication – a fundamental concern of Semenko's "Cablepoem," in which the four directions of the world are indicated and the names of continents are listed – Soroka links America and Ukraine, emphatically printed in bold capitals at the opposite corners of the composition, as if to visualize the distance between himself and his wife. Dynamic movements in the work are stressed by the arrow and the phrase *Lety do Nadiiky* ("Fly to Nadiika"), while another capitalized word, *Klianys* ("I swear"), is followed by the poet's assertion of his faithfulness which is summarized by a sly phrase that hardly any woman would stare at him with a wedding ring on his finger. The typography of the poem also accentuates the lyrical character of the message, inasmuch as the text is written in delicate and fragile letters; this typeface has nothing in common with Semenko's assertive, and even aggressive, bold and ultra bold typeface.

Interestingly, the same visual piece by Semenko inspires Jars Balan, a Canadian visual poet of Ukrainian descent, to offer his response to the aesthetic and formal issues raised by the leading Ukrainian Panfuturist as well as the form if its representation (Fig. 223). But Balan's work is not identified as a "Cablepoem" or any other message to be transmitted, though it does use the staccato style of a telegram. Nor does it imply any notion of a physical or metaphorical journey. Balan's concerns are mostly artistic, and to a certain extent political. The very first line in the top block reads, "And what is this – poezo/painting?" – followed by the provocative question: "I ASK YOU: Shevchenko or Semenko?" with the first part of the phrase presented in bold capital letters. It is worth noting that Semenko's 1914 attacks on Ukraine's national bard created a sensation, and have never been forgotten or forgiven by Ukrainian critics or state officials.[101] Nonetheless, in Balan's interpretation the rhetorical question suggesting that one must choose between the traditional and the unconventional, abruptly takes off in another direction, which is influenced by the violent propaganda characteristic of revolutionary and Stalinist-era Ukraine. Thus, the next line reads "the electrified muse is the revolver of revolution," sounding like a Leninist slogan pointing to a radical change in poetry, but at the same time foreshadowing the dark end ironically hinted in the closing line of the poem: "TOGETHER we'll send flowers to comrade Stalin."[102] Meanwhile, the fourth line, A *mozhe vy maiete inshi bazhannia?* ("Perhaps, you have other wishes") subtly alludes to another poet, Mykola Bazhan, who began his poetic career as a Futurist but later became an orthodox court poet for the Soviet régime.

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[100] Soroka, Mykols. *Zorova Poeziia*, n. pag.

The look of Balan's composition consciously mimics Semenko's work and therefore cannot be described as graphically innovative, but the verbal message is particularly notable for the word-play involving the extensive use of puns and macaronic language. The latter, for instance, is evident in the use of the Russian words *da* and *niet* in their Ukrainian transliteration instead of Ukrainian *tak* and *ni* (which means "yes" and "no" respectively). It was a common practice of the Ukrainian Panfuturists to blend Cyrillic and Latin transcriptions and to introduce foreign words into Ukrainian texts to give their compositions an international feel. The repetition of *Da* six times serves as a kind of tip of the author's hat in the direction of Dadaism while simultaneously and ominously sounding like a burst of machine-gun fire. The paronomastic elements of Balan's composition is based on the similar pattern created by the subsequent repetition of *pan* both as a prefix and as the Ukrainian word meaning "Mr" or the German "Herr" (*pani* being the feminine form of "Mrs"). The chain of polite addresses commonly used by Western Ukrainians *pan doktor*, ("Herr doctor"), *pan dyrektor* ("Herr director"), *pan redaktor* ("Herr editor"), *pan inzhener* (Herr engineer") is unexpectedly interrupted by the name of the mythological Pandora (symbolically associated with fate and bad luck), in which the affix *pan* is an integral element of the Greek word. The next constituents of the chain, *pani Pchilka* ("Mrs. Pchilka," the pseudonym of the turn of the century author Olha Kosach) continues the earlier tread of literary name-dropping, as does the following reference to the 19th century writer Panteleimon Kulish. The pattern is further broken, though the literary theme is maintained, by the word *panfuturist*, after which syllabically written, capitalized and also emphasized by the exclamatory mark word *PA-NI-KA* ("panic") suggests the typical reaction of the general public to Panfuturist experimentation.

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[101] Semenko's appeal to discard the classics of literature is well-known and frequently referred to. Less known is the fact that the journal *Nova Generatsiia* which was edited by Semenko in the late 1920s had a section entitled "The Rehabilitation of Shevchenko." Moreover, Semenko was also the literary editor of a silent film "Taras Shevchenko" produced by the Odessa film studio. What Semenko wanted to destroy was the cult of Shevchenko, so that he could be valued as a poet and not as a national symbol.

[102] The noun *tsvity* meaning "flowers," which is used in the West instead of Ukrainian *kvity*, is a typical example of the discursive accent, common to non-native users of the language.

Paronomastic technique is again echoed at the end of the next exclamation *Maiakovskii zahybuv svoi pantalony* ("Maiakovskii has lost his pantaloons") alluding to Maiakovskii's well-known poem "Oblako v shtanakh" ("Cloud Wearing Pants"), and in the further elaboration of the farcical image reflected in lines *a z nosa teche slyz / KAP / KAP / KAP / KAP / kapitalnyi khlopi tsei Moskovskyi myzhuchok* ("and snot is running from the nose / KAP / KAP / KAP / KAP / a capital fellow this Muscovite chap"). The entire sequence of paranomastics are humorously organized in the motif of a dance that begins on a proper and formal note but spins out of control. The dance is introduced in the seventh and eight lines by the phrase *odyn krok vpered, a dva nazad, takyi nash literaturnyi fokstrot, tantsiuiut...* which means "one step forward and two backward, this is our literary foxtrot, they dance," a gently mocking parody of Lenin's characterization of the revolutionary process. This movement from the comic to the absurd then ends with black humour in the final line "TOGETHER we'll send flowers to comrade Stalin," a poignant in tragicomic reference to the fact that Maiakovskii shot himself, while Semenko was executed in the rising tide of Stalinist terror. This composition is not Balan's only work to draw on Semenko's poezo-painting. Another of his silk screen prints "Ia poet i panfuturist" ("I am a Poet and a Panfuturist") covers similar terrain in paying tribute to his literary sources. It will be discussed later.

Among the few pastiches compositions by Ukrainian visual poets Ivan Iov's work which is designed by analogy with the ferropoem form invented by Russian Futurist Vasilii Kamenskii (Fig. 42) is worth examination. It is clear at first glance that Iov's work resembles Kamenskii's poem in appearance: there are several series of nominative words and short phrases horizontally arranged in segments which are divided by intersecting diagonals, syntactical patterns are very few, and various typesets are used. Despite the visual similarity, Iov's work differs from Kamenskii's ferropoems, and this difference lies in its verbal components: Iov's "Avert abetky mizhzorianykh hlybyn"[103] ("Turning way from the Alphabet of the Intercelestial Depths," fig. 224) is a linguistic game rather than an informative message. Iov's composition incorporates palindromes, neologisms, word-formation experiments, besides non-linguistic signs, independent letters and an indented page number. Although the poem should be approached as both literary work and visual composition, it is undoubtedly closer to linguistic literature than to visual experimentations.

Besides parodying and pastiching visual works of other poets, Ukrainian practitioners also attempt to translate visual poetry, which is a truly challenging undertaking, because not only the content but the shape of the poem must be retained. A proper study should be made of the conceptual principles of ttranslations of visual poetry, which is beyond the scope of the present inquiry. Nonetheless, it would be relevant to mention the most impressive results in this area. One of the first experiments of the figure text translation was Mykola Lukash's rendering of Apollinaire's calligram "La Colombe Poignardée et le Jet d"Eau"[104] (Fig. 225). Nowadays Mykola Myroshnychenko has distinguished himself not only in original visual poems but also in translations from German, Persian, Tadzhiki, Uzbeki, and other Asian languages of the former Soviet Union. To his credit are translations from Reinhard Döhl[105] (Fig. 226-227), Ataallah Makhmud-i Khusaini Atai, an Uzbeki poet of the 15th century (Fig. 228), Abbas Abdulla Gadzhaloglu (Fig. 229) and other visual practitioners. Ivan Luchuk translates primarily palindromes. One of his recent works in this area is a rendering of Herbert Pfeiffer's "Nur du, Gudrun!," a palindromic poem consisting of 66 female names[106] (Fig. 230), which is, in fact, a variation on Preiffer's theme rather than a translation.

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[103] Iov, Ivan. *Periodycha systema sliv* (Khmelnytskyi: Dolia, 1997), 48.

[104] Melnyk, Viktor. *Brattia vo khvosti*, 12

[105] See: Miroshychenko, Mykola. *Oko*, 56; *Literaturena* Ukraina, January 11 (1996): ?

## UKRAINIAN VISUAL POETRY IN WESTERN EUROPE

The Ukrainian literary community in Germany is quite numerous and productive although Ihor Tratsch is the only poet who (besides writing more conventional poetry) consistently writes visual poetry. Born and educated in Lviv, Ukraine, Tratsch has lived in Germany since 1988, and creates his works in both German and Ukrainian.

Although the examination of Tratsch's creative output in German goes beyond the objective of the present study, a comparative analysis of the two bodies of visual poetry created by the same author in two different languages presents a special interest. As a visual poet, Tratsch tends to the word or letter column technique, as well as to italicization, capitalization and, less frequently, to various type faces; occasionally he also employs punctuation marks as the dividers of semantic units within the poetic text. Tratsch's poems in German (most of which are recently composed) are typically meditative, and such an arrangement of the text deliberately slows down the understanding of the discourse, as it happens in his poem "Kätle" ("Cold"):

Cold
a
n
d
snow
y
o
u
r
heart

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[106] Luchuk, Ivan. "Okrim tebe –shebet, Mirko!" *Dity Marii,* November 10 (1994): 4.

i
s
f
r
e
e
z
i
n
g
. . .
cold

Two visual variants of the same poem exists one written in German[107] (Fig. 231), and another in Ukrainian[108] (Fig. 232), both being shaped as curved abstract configurations. The word arrangement creates a certain tension between the visual and the verbal, since it structures the non-linear reading process. In addition, two words in each composition, meaning "your" and "is freezing," suggests the reverse letter by letter reading. In its verbal aspect the German variant is antepiphoric; in the Ukrainian text instead of a repetition of the same word, two synonyms *zymno* and *kholod* ("cold") are used in the first and the last lines.

In the poem "Auf meinen gesplitterten Lebensweg" ("On My Shattered Road of Life," fig. 233) the author also employs the column structure, however, he does not chop up words for emphatic purposes, but organizes them in a pleasing manner, which cannot be preserved to the fullest in English translation:

on
my
shattered
road of life

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[107] Tratsh, Ihor. *Berührungen* (Paris, Lviv, Zwickau: Ukrainischer Verlag, 1997), 13.

[108] Tratsh, Ihor. *Dotyky* (Paris, Lviv, Zwickau: Ukrainske vydavnystvo, 1997), 13.

I
feel

warmth
of
your
heart

In general the layout of Tratsch's visual poems in German is terse and somewhat monotonous with respect to the visual means employed. Only a few poems have drawings or other ornamental details inserted in the poetic fabric, like the poem "Herbstblumen. . ." ("Autumnal Flowers," fig. 234), in which lyrical recollection of spring feelings in autumn is visually intensified by the stylized pictorial image of the calla lily[109]. Tratsch's visual poems in Ukrainian (especially his earlier compositions) in most cases are more ornamental and visually diverse.[110] In the poem titled as "Ia shukaiu Ukrainu v Evropi" ("I Am Looking for Ukraine in Europe," fig. 235)[111] besides various type faces, which also differ in their size, the drawing of a stork (a common figure in Ukrainian folk literature and mythology[112]) is indented, as well as the stylized map of Europe. The arrangement of the verbal material (which consists of four semantic groups: "on the roads of huge Europe," "am looking for," "I" and "my lost worlds") suggests the possibility of various ways of reading, as in the case of the Proteus poem, in which a limited set of words is modified within the body of the poem. Due to the flexible word order of the standard Ukrainian, each semantic group may serve as the starting point for the further phrase construction.

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[109] In his collection of visual poetry in German entitled *Berührungen* the text of this poem appears without decorative elements. It is accompanied, however, by the illustrations on the verso page, which is not suggestive of any floral motif. See: Tratsh, Ihor. *Berührungen*, 29.

[110] Simultaneously with his *Berührungen* Ihor Tratsch published a Ukrainian version of the book, which, nonetheless, cannot be regarded as translation from the German original. Interestingly, the Ukrainian version entitled *Dotyky* is ornamented by the same set of black and white illustrations (on the verso pages) by Ukrainian artists Oles Noga with the only difference that elemenets of compositions which are ink-receptive in Gernanian version are ink-repellent in Ukrainian. As a result the prevailing color of illustrations in the German version of the book is black, while in Ukrainian it is white.

[111] Hurhula, Ihor, ed. *Mystetsko-literaturnyi al-man-akh!!!!!!!* (Lviv: Osnova, 1993), 16.

[112] Ukrainian belief ascribes to the stork the magic power to protect human beings and households. For this reason the nest of the stork on the roof of a house, barn or tree is most desirable for Ukrainian farmers.

In the "Vmyraie vse"[113] ("Everything Dies," fig. 236) Tratsch does not employ graphical means other than lexical units (words and phrases), each serving as a building block for the structurally supple visual composition. Two letters on the top of the left side, namely *I* and *H*, show remote likeness to the ornamental initials of the old Ukrainian manuscripts; the flowing arrangement of the top five lines is suggestive of spirally coiled decorative details like helixes or scrolls. The spacial design of the next three lines of the poem is also far from a horizontally rigid line arrangement typical for Tratsch's visual poems in German. It is also worth mentioning that the author does not attempt to destroy or to compress syntax, although some punctuation marks are obviously missing. Moreover, "Vmyrae vse" is a rhymed poem, albeit its inflectional endings are not necessarily accurate phonetically. Indeterminate if not obscure visual configuration is apparently in consonance with the vague melancholic message of the poem, which reads: "Everything dies / We as well as the years / But my prophet is still alive / He didn't die and tell me for how long should I endure? / And then the fatal step may be taken / I am dying, you / Are passing by in silence / Majestic tender and alien / I say "farewell" / Ice and slippery / A sorrowful tune is being played."

Another work of interest by the same author is the poem "Ploshchyna paperu" ("Paper Space, fig. 237), where typographical design and spacial configuration resemble those of the previously discussed work, although the insertion of small black squares (ornamental rather than bearing any specific meaning) extends the arsenal of the visual means utilized. Due to the mainly vertical arrangement of the lines, the poem is perceived predominantly as a static composition, which conventionally begins in the top left corner and is to be read to the right. The only brief midverse pause (unmotivated either semantically or syntactically) should be ascribed to the unexpectedly divided word *proshkuiut*, which means "are marching," in the repeated line *vzhe riadky proshkuiut* ("the lines are already marching"), which is presented in the form of the column layout:

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[113] Hurhula, Ihor, ed. *Mystetsko-literaturnyi al-man-akh!!!!!!!,* 17.

vzhe riadky
prosh kuit

This morphological breakage attempted by the author cannot be motivated by grammar standards and should be recognised as an additional visual effect. Like "Vmyraie vse" "Ploshchyna paperu" is a rhymed verse, and its emotion-laden phrases provide an insight into the poet's creative method – a painful but exciting exploration of the paper space as white as snow. Thus the halting and arhythmic pace of the poem's unorthodox layout is justified, at least partially, by its discursive meaning.

In the visually frugal and verbally terse "Vsmikhalasia kalyna za viknom" ("The Viburnum Laughed Outside My Window, fig. 238)[114] the configuration of the text is completely divorced from its meaning, thus resembling the author's visual poems in German. The poem reads as "The viburnum laughed behind my window unfortunately it is my sad dream." The nostalgic mood of the poem could be easily understood by the reader, familiar with the important role of the virbunum as a national symbol typically used in Ukrainian songs and poetry. In my opinion the configuration of the text and its visual devices neither duplicates nor supplements the verbal level. Still it is possible to suggest that the last five lines of the text slightly resemble a stylized contour of a viburnum cluster; this supposition, however, is disputable. What seems surprising, if not strange, is that the preposition *na*, which in combination with the adverb *zhal* forms a phraseological unit *na zhal* with the meaning "unfortunately," appears to be more visually potent than the second structural element of the same unit. If the author had emphasized both elements by the identically enlarged and bold type faces, the nostalgic lyricism of the poem would be more explicit.

In a strict sense Vilen Barsky's "Poema pro K" ("Poem About K," fig. 239) cannot be recorded as a visual poem in Ukrainian by a German author, inasmuch as the poem was created in Kyiv in 1976 before Barsky's immigration to Germany. Moreover, Barsky's native language is Russian and his creative output, including visual poetry, belongs to the Russian and not Ukrainian tradition of writing. "Poema pro K" (written in 1976)[115] is his sole work in Ukrainian. The poem comprises two words, the first *pochatok* with the meaning "beginning" and the second *kinets* which means "end," both having the letter *k* in their structure: the former in the final and the latter in the initial position. The rest of the poem body comprises a succession of letters *k* constructed in a grid-like composition, which is typical for a rectangular labyrinth. The content of the poem can be easily grasped by a quick glance at it.

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[114] Hurhula, Ihor, ed. *Mystetsko-literaturnyi al-man-akh!!!!!!!*, 18.

Two visual poems were composed in France by Liubomyr Hoseiko. In his "Skhodiat amfiliady paralelohramiv" (the title of which can be rended as "The Succession of Parallelograms Rise," fig. 240)[116] the beginning of each line is shifted in regard to the previous one, which results in a non-traditional configuration of the composition. His pattern poem "Eifeleva vezha"[117] ("Eiffel Tower," fig. 241) is shaped as the world-famous tower, "a powerful image of modernity,"[118] symbolising a new style of life, a predominantly urban and new sensitivity, that of the technological era. The image of the Eiffel Tower with its strong symbolic impact was repeatedly used by many artists and writers, including Appollinaire, Huidobro, Däubler, Cendras, and others. Hoseiko's visual representation of the tower, which alludes to the fragments of Appolinaire' s calligram "2e Canonnier Conducteur" ("2d Gunnery Driver," fig. 242)[119], also exploits this image of modernity, however its meaning is not unquestionably positive. Nor does it have the humorous connotation of Appolinaires' Eiffel Tower either. Hoseiko's poem verbally records the author's impression in the form of the poetic urban landscape with the focus on the Eiffel Tower. The beginning of the composition reads: "And once again somewhere in the grey mist Paris embraced the songs of a new day again the tyrannic finger of the iron tower wedged in the beam of the day." As for the text structure and rhetorical strategies, they are clear and quite conventional for a pattern poem. The solid form of the poem, reproducing the pictorial image without any recourse to graphic or other visual means, quite accurately reflects its content. The typography of the poem is not innovative either, since the whole body of the text is printed in capital letters. The only unexpected feature of Hoseiko's composition is the linear word arrangement of the text represented in the form of column layout which shapes the legs of the tower. This text is not supposed to be read as columns ( as short lines to be read from the top to the bottom) but rather from left to right for the whole length of the line, divided in its middle by a wide space between the words. Such an arrangement seems strange as the column-shaped text does not require strong pauses between the columns:

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[115] In his letter of December 12, 1997 to the author Vilen Barsky suggests that although his first language is Russian, he is most likely the author of the first contemporary visual poem in Ukrainian. As he further points out, the question of temporal precedence in this matter is not clear because in Soviet literature an accurate record of events was not kept. Judging from the available data, Mykola Kholodnyi, whose visual compositions are created in the late 1960s, must be the author of the first post-war visual poem in Ukrainian. Mykola Miroshnychenko confirms that he wrote his first pattern poem in 1971. Therefore, Vilen Barsky turns out to have been the third poet who attempted to express himself by means of visual poetry.

[116] Hoseiko, Liubomyr. *Soniashnychynnia na novomisiachchi* (Bruissel: Zoria, 1969), 119.

[117] Hoseiko, 120.

[118] White, John J. *Literary Futurism: Aspects of the First Avant Garde*, 154.

[119] Apollinaire, Guillaume. *Calligrams: Poems of Peace and War (1913-1916)*, 126.

Somewhere the feather of
Siena is floating
like blood
of eras to dust
in the ravine of games

Only the last two lines of the column-shaped structure (bases of the tower legs) can be read in either direction without serious distortion of the meaning:

at the top in the centre
in the elevators Frenchmen

Hoseiko's poem is not innovative or experimental in any meaningful sense. It it is definitely not in tune, at least at the level of content, with the numerous works of avant-garde poets and artists of the first part of the century, who created the cult of the Eiffel Tower. Although the poet sees the tower as an integral element of the city and the symbol of Paris, he is very far from admiring or worshipping the radio-mast. Conversely, its suppression of less powerful constituents of the city is not regarded as beneficial for Paris and its inhabitants. The decades separating generations of the first avant-garde wave of the 20th century from its contemporaries have considerably altered not only the style of life but its perception as well.

## HYPHENATED CREATIVITY: VISUAL POETRY OF CANADIANS AND AMERICANS OF UKRAINIAN DESCENT.[120]

By and large Canadian visual poetry does not have a long history;[121] it is largely a product of modern sensibility and new forms of communication. The achievements of Canadian visual poets of Ukrainian descent, however, can be ascribed to two main factors: the international revival of the genre in 60-70s which has stimulated the experimentations of bpNikol, Earle Birney, Bill Bissett, Stephen Scobie, and other Canadian practitioners, as well as interest in their ethnic heritage. Inasmuch as Ukrainian culture has a rich tradition of visual writing, the policy of multiculturalism appears to have been very beneficial for Ukrainian-Canadian authors.

The most valuable contribution to visual poetry in Ukrainian was made by three contemporary Canadian poets of Ukrainian or mixed descent: Brian Dedora, Jars Balan and Andrew Suknaski. While reducing the usage of language, all three simultaneously tend to minimize the linguistic experiments by shifting the main symbolic and semantic emphasis from textual to visual and graphical components. Ukrainian letters, separate words or inscriptions, and, less frequently, sentences are employed as structural elements of visual compositions or collages. In some works, which explore unmistakably Ukrainian motifs, like Jars Balan's "Hutsulam"[122] ("To the Hutsuls,"fig. 243), the use of language may be minimized to the point where the work looks like a geometrical composition – created in the style of Western Ukrainian ornamentation – by a handful of recognizable Ukrainian letters and punctuation marks (in Balan's poem – *Y, I, X* and !).

The pressure towards the marginalisation of the ancestral language, experienced by many hyphenated Canadians, was given visual expression in Brian Dedora's 1979 poem "vin vorukhnuvsia he moved corrái sé"[122] (Fig. 244a-i), which is, by the way, an exception in the Ukrainian-Canadian trend of minimalizing the usage of Ukrainian. Dedora is a Vancouver-based Canadian avant-garde poet of dual ancestry: Ukrainian and Irish.

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[120] A version of this chapter has been published in *Canadian Ethnic Studies* XXXVIII:1: 89-126.

[121] According to Dick Higgins only two nineteenth-century pattern poems from Canada are known. The first one is the poem in French shaped as an hour glass by the Quebec poet Albert Ferland (1872-1943). The only English-language sample is a tombstone of about 1865 for Henrietta and Susanna Bean, two wives of Dr. Samuel Bean (1842-1904). The text on the tombstone is reminiscent of the rectangular labyrinth. See: Higgins, Dick. *Pattern Poetry: Guide to Unknown Literature,* 17, 69, 107-108.

[122] The poem was published in the Ukrainian literary journal *Vsesvit*. See: Nazarenko, Tetiana. "Obraz slova: Vizualna poeziia Iaroslava Balana v konteksti chasu i istorii zhanru" *Vsesvit,* 1 (1995): 26.

His poem consists of nine panels or leaves, each offering an evolutionary movement of a repeated text. It does not contain any structural elements other than the basic textual configuration. In fact, four panels out of the nine are not obviously composed as visual texts. Dedora presents the same poetic text in its Ukrainian and Gaelic variants, arranged in two columns in the first panel. However, starting with the second panel, the text manifests a dynamic visual gradation: little by little the two columns move towards each other, superimpose and finally merge. From their interpenetration a new text – the English variant of the same poem – begins to emerge in the climactic fifth panel. The further movement of the text follows a pattern of reverse gradation: three distinct columns break up and gradually separate in such a way that the two initial texts in Ukrainian and Gaelic are graphically marginalised. As a result of these manipulations, the sequence of nine panels compose a dynamic visual and highly metaphorical image. The visible dynamism of the poem is achieved in a way that is similar to the cinematographic technique of producing moving images out of static frames.

Correspondingly, the syntax of Dedora's poem fuses the paradigm of pattern poetry with that of cinematography. Thus, the subordination of words to an image, characteristic of visual poetry, is evident from the third through to the seventh panels where the text can hardly be read at all, and in the eight panel, where parts of two lines overlap. Furthermore, due to the fact that the content of the text remains unchanged from the beginning to the end of the poem, it is possible to suggest that only the first and the last panels of the work are intended for careful reading. As the poem unfolds, the reader is expected to digest successive panels in a single glance until the very last page when the English variant of the text is presented in its fully comprehensible aspect. Consequently, the look of the text is the key element in its perception by the reader. At the same time, the attention of the reader is primarily drawn by the way that the images are linked together and change their physical dimensions and spacialization, rather than by the actual shape of the written text. This undoubtedly hints at the influence of cinematographic technique.

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[122] Dedora, Brian. "vin vorukhnuvsia he moved corrái sé" (Toronto: Underwhich Editions, 1979).

In this light, the content of the poem seems to be reduced to the least important element of the work. Nonetheless, the poetic discourse as such, even though less powerful than the visual component, does call attention to itself. First of all, the text of the poem is a lyrical construct rendered in free verse, and as such is of some interest. What is even more arresting is that the text of the poem makes its verbal contribution to the illusion of dynamism, created by the layout. The poem describes a momentary sensation of both physical and psychological discomfort, likely caused by the sensory pain and emotional uneasiness implicitly stemming from it. The title itself – "he moves," with the active verb in its structure – emphasizes the idea of motion or mutability. This idea is reinforced in the diction of the poem, where verbs of motion or transition play a dominant role, such as "stir," "press," "grow," and "move." Thus the pictorial and cinematic elements combine with the verbal aspect to form an image that is aesthetically whole and which may be read metaphorically and literally.

Unlike Brian Dedora, the Edmonton-based visual poet Jars Balan takes the word rather than the sentence or the verse, as his basic unit of composition. Balan's creations often rely on holophrastic words, which function as a complex idea or sentence. Letters of the Ukrainian alphabet, isolated words and very short or elliptical sentences in Ukrainian function as clues for the identification of ethnic themes and motifs and for the deciphering of the author's messages. Among all the Ukrainian Canadian visual poets, Balan has the largest body of works oriented towards Ukrainian issues. As a rule, Balan's visual poems can also be presented as well-balanced and elegant graphical compositions. Many of his works call more on the power of interpretive vision than on traditional textual reading, since the text as such exists in an extremely compressed form, reduced to a word or an inscription. The poem "Vivtar"[123] ("The Altar," fig. 245) may serve as an example. It should be mentioned that the altar, together with the cross, heart and wings, was a very popular pattern for figured European poetry of the 16th through the 18th centuries. However, there is a significant difference between traditional pattern poems, where the poetic or lyrical text is sculptured in a concrete visual pattern, and that of Balan's "Vivtar." Balan uses Ukrainian letters as the building blocks of his poetry, though they do not necessarily perform the functions of linguistic signs. In "Vivtar" the letters *ICX* arranged in a zig-zag at the margins, create the acronym for "Jesus Christ" in its Ukrainian spelling. At the bottom of the central panel, letters form the motto *Slava vo vyshnykh Bohu!* which means "Praise the Lord on High." The Greek letters for alpha and omega, encapsulated in the small domes of the tabernacle on the altar, undoubtedly make reference to the famous Biblical quotation. The *X* at the centre of the tabernacle probably further alludes to the cross of St. Andrew, the patron saint of the Orthodox Eastern Slavs. Other letters retain their normal typographical identity, but operate merely as ornamental objects suggestive of an embroidered covering typically found on Ukrainian altars. On close examination the conventionalized configuration of the altar can be recognized without any knowledge of Ukrainian. It is possible to suggest that even those letters which acquire symbolic meaning or form the motto, play a supportive role to the apparently dominant graphic vision.

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[123] *Vsesvit,* 1(1995): 26.

The question whether such works should be defined as visual poetry rather than pieces of graphic art has been debated for several decades. As has been mentioned in the previous chapter, this question remains open. In Balan's "Vivtar," however, the borderline between graphic art and visual poetry is vague, even though this work is not perceived as pure graphic abstraction, divorced from the idea of any linguistic significance.

The mixed nature of Balan's visual poems does not prevent the author from engaging in verbal puzzles, puns, onomatopoeic effects, etc, although the majority of word game poems are created in English. Characterized by a minimal text, his poems are sometimes built on word games, like "Home Suite Home," (Fig. 246) which utilizes paronomasia, a play on similar-sounding words, or "Architextual Conceptions: The Concrete Block" (Fig. 247), which is based on the polysemy (the quality of having two or more closely related meanings) of the adjective "concrete." His "Blyskucha ideia"[124] ("A Brilliant Idea," fig. 248) is considered a trite metaphor which has lost its power and become a cliché. The author's attempt to designate the abstract notion by the visual representation of physical phenomenon – a luminous comet appearing in the sky – brings the expression into sharper focus. The astute reader will easily make the connection between the concept and its visual representation which is intensified by the cluster of letters which shape the body of the comet.

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[124] The poem was published in the American monthly magazine *Our Life*. See: Nazarenko, Tatiana "Contemporary Visual Poetry by North American Poets of Ukrainian Descent," *Our Life* 6:54 (1997): 19.

Another noteworthy example of a linguistically-based work is a shrinking poem inspired by Wordsworth's well-known aphorism, "Poetry is emotion recollected in tranquility." Balan's telegraphic rendering of this maxim reads "HEART– HEAT = ART"[125] (Fig. 249). The mathematical-type equation is based on the principle of structural diminution, which operates at the level of the word. In Balan's poem the author's concern for both structural diminution and phonetic patterning provides a visual, as well as an acoustic effect. Thus Balan's poem is written in English, but in the Ukrainian tradition of visual poetry a similar approach is taken in the layout of Ivan Velychkovskyi's syllabic poem "Stovp"[126] ("Column," fig. 250), where each successive line acquires an additional syllable, starting from two and ending in thirteen; and Mykhailo Semenko's comic poezo-painting "Silskyi peizazh"[127] ("Village Landscape, "fig. 46) from his *Kobzar*, which reads as *O, ao, aoo, aooo, Pavlo, popasu koroovu* ("O, ao, aoo, aooo, Pavlo, tend the c-o-w"). Semenko's poem, like Balan's Wordsworthian formulation, has both acoustic and visual dimensions.

Balan's output of pattern poetry also includes a whole set of transmutational poems, usually with an explicit humorous content, such as "Temple Song"[128] (Fig. 251) and "Bored meeting (minutes)" (Fig. 252). The title of the latter, for instance, is built on the homophonous quality of the words: "bored" and "board." While "Lecture Notes" (Fig. 253) employs the conventional vertical column-structure characteristic of a transmutational poem "Temple song" modifies this structure to create a vertical zig-zag, the beginning of the poem being echoed in the final refrain. The poem ambiguously blends the physical with the spiritual in the context of ancient Greek religious practice. Essentially the text is the kind of celebratory invocation that one might have heard during the ritual deflowering of vestal virgins in the goddess worshipping temples of the pre-classical era. The numbing effect of the chant is conveyed through the repetition of the words laid out in an aesthetically pleasing pattern on the page; perhaps suggestive of a wisp of smoke rising from an altar. Indeed, a visual metonymy is created by the arrangement of the angled lines. The text of the poem could be also understood as a type of love song, where the act of deflowering acquires the virtue of a sacred event, glorified by the hymnal sound.

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[125] *Vsesvit*, 1 (1995): 26.

[126] Velychkovskyi, Ivan. *Tvory*, 85.

[127] See: Mydrak, Myroslava. *The New Generation and Artistic Modernism in the Ukraine* (An Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1986), 173.

[128] *Vsesvit*, 1 (1995): 31.

Several works of Balan utilize the labyrinth form, which has been popular with poets since antique time. In the Ukrainian poetic tradition this form was adopted and reached its beak in the Baroque period, when labyrinthine texts became common throughout Europe. Most Ukrainian Baroque labyrinths have religious themes, but some have a panegyric character.[129] In terms of their structure, both types of labyrinths – the centred one in which the first letter of the written text is placed in the centre of the composition, and the type defined by Piotr Rypson as progressive, "where the first line constitutes the text proper, and the next lines result from the shifting the first one to the left or right,"[130] can be found in Ukrainian Baroque literature. The centred and the progressive labyrinth differ in the way of reading, as well as in the method of ingress. Mytrofan Dovhalevskyi's centred labyrinth *Candida Rex Russi, nomen tibi suscipe sacrum*[131] (Fig. 25), which translates into English as "Illustrious King of Rus, take for yourself a sacred name," begins in the middle and can be read up or down, and to the right or left. His cruciform poem *Hoc signo Christi vinces omnes inimicos* ("You will conquer all enemies by this sign of Christ") is another example of a Ukrainian Baroque labyrinth (Fig. 27, Chapter 1), which stresses the symbolic potential inherent in the sign. Ivan Velychkovskyi also created several labyrinth poems with different methods of ingress. (Fig. 20-25). Although the progressive labyrinth was probably less common in Ukrainian culture, an example of it is Dovhalevskyi's *Anna, Potens Mundi, saecula longa petas*[132] ("Anna, mighty of the world aim at many years," fig. 24), which begins in the top left corner and then can be read downwards and to the right. Balan's composition "Oi ziishla rannia zoria, alyluia" ("Oh, the early star has risen, alleluia," fig. 254) mixes two structural types, inasmuch as it employs the elements of both the centred and the progressive labyrinth. Although a shift to the right embracing one character is employed in the poem, it does not result in the exact inversion of the first line, which is typically occurs in the progressive labyrinth. In fact, Balan's composition employs a modified version of the centred labyrinth with the first line of the poem being identical with the last one. The opening exclamatory words of the poetic line *Oi ziishla* begins in the corners of the rectangular composition and can be read in two directions. The third and the fourth words *rannia zoria* read differently at the top and sides of the labyrinth so as to create a diamond-shaped pattern in the text. The first and the last letters of *rannia*, and the last letter of *zoria*, are also done in enlarged bold typefaces to emphasize the diamond formed within the rectangle of the poem. *Alyluia*, the final word of the poetic message, then subverts the flow of words by beginning in the centre with the bold *A* and reading outwards along horizontal and vertical planes. In this way the ecstatic proclamation *alyluia* is graphically set apart from the rest of the poem. Furthermore, the liquid vowel and consonant combinations clustered around the central *Aa–oo-ly-ly-oo* and other variations – give the final word in two verbal chains an added vocal emphasis. Another of Balan's labyrinth exploration is his poem "SH! (the secret)"[133] (Fig. 255). This labyrinth is not as complex as the work discussed above, although it features a similar grid-like composition. Unlike its Baroque antecedents, which can usually be decoded in various ways, Balan's poem is simply read in the conventional manner from left to right. The anomaly in this basic arrangement is that the word "marijuana" is sown in vertical lines inconspicuously amid the horizontal rows formed by "corn." It is interesting to note that labyrinths in Baroque literature were considered to reflect an attitude towards life "as a journey fraught with dangers and the temptations of worldly vanity."[134] To some extent the theme of Balan's visual secret is consistent with this worldview.

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[129] Soroka, Mykola. *Zorova poeziia v ukrainskii literaturi kintsia XVI -XVIII st.*, 91.

[130] Rypson, Piotr. "The Labyrinth Poem ," *Visible Language,* XX: 1 (1986), 67.

[131] Dovhalevskyi, Mytrofan. *Poetyka: Sad poetychnyi,* 294.

[132] Dovhalevskyi, 295.

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[133] Dovhalevskyi, 27.

[134] Anthony Hippisley, *The Poetic Style of Simeon Polotsky* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1985), 57.

Just as labyrinths are intended to hide a secret – the key which will unlock the mystery of how to negotiate myriad passageways – so "SH!" too contains a concealed truth. Obviously written tongue-in-cheek, it would not be inappropriate to characterize the work as a "corny" joke, given the author's love of puns and often self-deprecating sense of humour.

Among the few examples of linguistic games that Balan attempts in the Ukrainian language is the poem entitled "Tykha nich"[135] ("Silent Night," fig. 256). Here the quietness of night is visually symbolised by the conglomeration of soft signs which do not correspond to any speech sounds but are used in Ukrainian orthography for marking the soft pronunciation of consonants. Essentially Balan attempts to visualize a sort of onomatopoeic effect, imitating visually the absence of noise and the subdued sounds of a quiet night.

Generally, Balan's visual poems are not resistant to interpretation and the process of decoding his graphic and linguistic signs usually does not require a high degree of competence on the part of readers. However, several works by Balan, rooted mainly in Ukrainian or Ukrainian-Canadian history, demand a certain background knowledge. The meaning of the poem "Holod"[136] ("Famine," fig. 257) would seem to be difficult to discern if the reader is not aware of one of the most tragic and least investigated events of modern Ukrainian history. According to recent research, five to seven million Ukrainians perished in a Soviet government-created famine in 1932-1933, though even this shocking figure may be too low.[137] The unknown number of victims of this deliberate act of genocide is suggested by the succession of zeros presented in the framed panel, which in turn resembles the inscription on a tombplate. The author's refusal to present an exact figure, which cannot be verified several decades after the event because of the deliberate suppression of the Soviet census of 1937, leaves it to the competent reader to grasp the magnitude of this national catastrophe. It should be mentioned that the same topic was explored by Ukrainian visual practitioner Myroslav Korol, who composed several variants of this theme (Fig. 258-260), all of them demonstrating a certain affinity with the semantics and scarcity of visual means of Balan's composition.

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[135] *Vsesvit,* 1 (1995): 27.

[136] *Vsesvit* 1 (1995): 27.

[137] Mace, James. E. "The Man-made Famine of 1933 in Soviet Ukrain," Serbyn, Roman, and Krawchenko, Bohdan, eds. *Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1986), 11.

Another work composed in a similar vein is "Found poem: in a cemetery near Dauphin[138] (Fig. 261). It documents a tragedy from Ukrainian-Canadian pioneer history, expressed visually through a vertical succession of inscriptions taken from tombstones marking the graves of five children in the Negrich family. For these young pioneers, residents of Central Manitoba, the promised land of Canada turned out to be a merciless and hostile country. None of them survived as long as a year, and some only lived a few days after birth. Each inscription is a mournful memory of the shortlived existence of Andrew, Anthony, Rozalka, Anilka and Vera Negrich. It is surely symbolic that the last to die was Vera, as the name ironically means "faith" in Ukrainian.[139] This sorrowful page of family history is representative of a tragic destiny that befell many Ukrainian pioneers in Canada. The syntax of the poem is simple and orderly. The discourse – comprised of the conventional layout of the data, marking birth and death dates, followed by the acronym for Rest in Peace (R.I.P.), is used to create the image of a graveyard. The information provided is not framed or bordered, only separated by white spaces, the absence of visual and typographical devices emphasizing the stark content of the poem. Any additional sign, unrelated to the factual details would be superfluous and inappropriate to the message of the text. Since the layout of the poem seems to have been strictly utilitarian rather than aesthetic, the presence of the author is practically undetectable. Indeed, he rejects his authorship by stating that the poem was found in a cemetery near Dauphin and undoubtedly presented without any alterations.

Much of Balan's recently-produced visual poetry in both Ukrainian and English is based on personalized forms of letters and typographical signs, distorted in a pictorial fashion. The use of anthropomorphized letters – commonly found in advertisements and children's literature – initially appeared in Balan's on-going series *Autobiografika* (*Autobiographica,* fig. 262). The entire work is based on the Cyrillic letter *Ia* (a backward "R"), which in Ukrainian corresponds to the personal pronoun "I" and to the initial letter of the name Iaroslav (Jars) in its Ukrainian transcription. Another of Balan's well-known works is his "Ia poet i panfuturyst" ("I am a Poet and a Panfuturist") which employs again the letter *ia* as its key and can be regarded as the artist's tribute to the spirit of the Ukrainian avant-garde (Fig. 263). Balan's poem incorporates three spatially separated semantic blocks, each created through the use of different typesets and type sizes. The dominant element of the design is a sizable letter *ia* in red and black, which fills the right side of the work and structurally organizes the space. In addition to verbal messages in black and red on the "open" left-side and centre, there is a stylized portrait with some characteristic details (moustache, spectacles) depicting the author at the top of the work. The cartoon-like representation uses the Ukrainian capital letter *p*, to schematically outlines the contour of the head, and serves as the starting point for reading the inset. Together the letters *o* and *e* create the author's eyes, while the *t* format the moustache and complete the word *poet*. The message continues with a free-hand brush stroke *i* ("and"), a calligraphic element that stands in sharp contrast to the hard-edged letter forms and geometrical crispness of the entire composition. This jarring detail is perceived as an alien element, perhaps alluding to the endeavour of the Futurists to undermine existing artistic norms. As the eye moves downward the text is continued by the ambiguous message *Pan Futuryst* which may be rendered "Mr. Futurist" or "Panfuturist," thus beginning a game which the author plays with prefixes. The textual component of the next semantic block is comprised of the noun *deconstruktyvist*, ("deconstructivist") which is usually deconstructed by means of a rectangular grid that breaks up the word into ever-diminishing, non-grammatical units. Although the mechanistic look of the layout alludes to constructivist art, the addition of the prefix *de* adds a playful element of contradiction, and at the same time it identifies the author with the deconstructivist school of literary criticism. The third semantic block, which reads *obrazo-tvorchyi PYSMENNYK* ("a picture-creating decorative writer") conceals a joke which involves verbal punning. Whereas the three words of the phrase *obrazo-tvorchyi PYSMENNYK* are written in hard-edged letters with the last word for "writer" being emphasized by the use of caps, a prefix in brush script serves to visually and verbally subvert the meaning at the entire swing. That is because when *roz* is added to *PYSMENNYK* it creates a somewhat ambiguous compound that suggests the word *rozpysmennyk* which does not exist in Ukrainian, although there is the verb *rozpysuvaty* which means "to paint all over." Thus, Balan's neologism can be easily construed to read "decorative writer," which on the one hand acknowledges that the author is a visual poet, but on the other hand can insinuate that he is a kind of "scribbler" with all the derogatory connotations which that implies. At the same time it is possible that he is mocking those critics who dismiss visual poetry as frivolous and inconsequential.

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[138] Balan, Jars, and Klynovy , Yuri , ed. *Yarmarok: Ukrainian Writing in Canada Since the Second World War* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, 1987), 18.

[139] Nazarenko, Tetiana. "Obraz slova: Vizualna poeziia Jaroslava Balana v konteksti chasu i istorii zhanru" *Vsesvit,* 1 (1995): 32.

The same punning technique is utilized in the message which is vertically aligned along the stem of the letter *ia* (all other messages are perfectly horizontal in their layout). The kernel phrase which reads *nova generatsiia* ("new generation") referring to the title of the Ukrainian futurist journal edited by Mykhailo Semenko in the 1920s. However, the prefixes *z* and *de* are added to the words *nova* and *generatsiia*, they change the denotative meaning of the phrase beyond recognition, since *znova degeneratsiia* in Ukrainian means "renewed degeneration." This undoubtedly mocks the common philistine attitude toward artistic and literary experimentation, and toward view on artistic and literary experimentation, and toward pattern poetry in particular. Interestingly, by doing so, Balan explicitly suggests that there is a bond between the Ukrainian Futurists and their contemporary successors on both discursive ("renewed") and graphic (the location of the phrase on the stem of the letter *ia* identified with the author) levels. Although the multicolored and graphically inventive dynamic "Ia poet i panfuturyst") simultaneously communicates through pictorial and verbal images, the visual elements function predominantly as supportive constituents of the composition, inasmuch as its semantic component is primarily interpreted by verbal means and not by the interplay between the verbal and the graphic.

Balan's poems like "Teen Jam"[140] (Fig. 264), "Poetychna dyskusiia za kruhlym stolom"[141] ("Round Table Poetic Discussion"), "Kapelia im. H. Kytastoho"[142] ("The H. Kytasty Ensemble"), continue in an anthropomorphic vein, though the make-up of the letters is more plastic. Furthermore, each letter form is highly individualized, and many are presented in motion, though the visible dynamism and degree of personalization of letters varies from poem to poem. In "Teen Jam," combined letters in the English alphabet take the shape of human bodies, in this case teenagers socializing in a park. Seven of the fourteen figures are portrayed in action, namely, walking, jumping, running, playing the guitar, etc. However, in the poem "Bookstore reading"[143] (Fig. 265 ) the majority of the figures created in the same way are static. In "Kapelia im. H. Kytastoho" (Fig. 266) schematically arranged letters represent members of a choir, grouped according to vocal timbre, although some of the chosen typeface details (such as stylized moustaches and traditional male scalp-locks) provide a hint of the choristers' ethnicity. The work also has an apparent acoustic element, as the open vowels that comprise the text represent the vocal warm-up exercise – *ah, eh, ee, oh, oo* – traditionally used by singers as they practise their scales. In "Poetychna dyskusiia za kruhlym stolom" (Fig. 267) letters symbolize the participants in a round table discussion of poetry at a gathering in Lviv in 1990. The wide divergence in the typeface styles used to create the scene no doubt reflects the differences in poetic voices and opinions among the assembled authors. One wonders which of the letters represents Balan in this noisy meeting of artists.

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[140] *Vsesvit*, 1 (1995): 27.

[141] *Vsesvit*, 1 (1995): 28.

[142] *Vsesvit*, 1 (1995): 33.

Andrew Suknaski, a Canadian poet of Ukrainian and Polish ancestry, who currently resides in southern Saskatchewan, successfully creates in various genres of visual and traditional poetry. His works include collages, poem drawings, concrete poems, experimental haiku and narratives. Even his conventional poems frequently employ an unorthodox layout. There is no evidence, however, to suggest that Suknaski has made conscious use of the rich traditions of Ukrainian graphic literature. His experimental poetry is based on various forms of visual and linguistic expression drawn on occasion from multicultural sources. Suknaski's Ukrainian heritage emerges in his writing in two ways. First, the poet explores ethnic themes and motifs in poems dealing with his personal experience as a hyphenated-Canadian, or dedicated to notable events and personalities in Ukrainian life. Second, Suknaski sometimes uses Ukrainian words in multilingual word play, usually for the sake of creating sonic or semantic effects. In contrast to his impressive body of works in English, the Ukrainian-language part of his output is modest.

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[143] See: Nazarenko, Tatiana "Ukrainian Canadian Visual Poetry: Traditions and Innovations," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, XXVIII:1 (1996): 123.

The poem "Autumn Equinox,"[144] (Fig. 268) originally created in 1969, was later published in the chapbook *Writing on Stone: Poem Drawings 1966-76*. In this collection the author attempts to integrate English, Ukrainian, French and Chinese elements in the synthetical form of poem drawings.[145] Suknaski's interest in Chinese ideograms and their utilization in visual poetry is not accidental, given that Chinese writing has much in common with concrete poetry. In both cases "ideogrammatic expression depends on the juxtaposition of several pictographic signs, which may be combine [sic] to create a sentence or a single word."[146] As Ernest Fellosa observes, "In the process of compounding, two things added together do not produce a third thing but suggest some fundamental relation between them."[147] This creative principle is utilized in Suknaski's poem "Autumn Equinox," which pictorially presents a schematised image of the universe at the time of the autumn equinox. The central structural components of this image – the parts which are labelled as heaven, earth and man – are graphically configured in the shape of the Chinese ideogram, denoting "king." At the same time this sign functions as the background for two ideograms which together stand for "autumn" in Chinese, in combination with a third ideogram representing "beginning," they convey the notion of the autumn equinox. Pictorial images of the sun and the moon are then used as supportive visual symbols for the poet's complex description of the natural phenomenon which occurs on the 22nd or 23rd of September, when day and night are of equal length, owing to the sun crossing the Equator.

The textual component of this work consists of three labels in the upper and central part of the poem drawing and its four bottom lines. The first bottom line is an expressive statement in Ukrainian, comprised of *akh* and the pronoun *tam*, which together mean "ah there". The second line is the English homophone of its Ukrainian predecessor, although it does not bear any meaning in English and thus requires further transformation. The latter finally results in the emergence of the English noun "autumn." The tautological nature of the poem is obvious, though any employed language or system of signs, involved in the process of image creation, adds some specific information, which is not covered by other mimetic or expressive means. Thus the line in Ukrainian introduces the notion of spatiality and distance, since the pronoun *tam* means "there." It is possible that this gestural phrase may refer to the distanced line of the Equator in the centre of the poem, whereas the Chinese ideogram on the left suggests the idea of a new beginning. Lines in English inject an acoustic dimension. Purely visual symbols are used to configure the image of the universe. Together all these elements produce the complex vision of the autumn equinox, which interests the poet as both a natural phenomenon and an important moment in the human life cycle. The latter seems implicit in the fact that the outlines of the ideograms denoting "autumn" (in the central part of the poem) clearly resemble human figures which are located at the "human" level of the universe. When the autumnal motif is applied as a metaphor of a certain stage in one's life, it is usually associated with sadness, sorrow or nostalgia, since the autumn is a season of incipient decay. In this light the work seems to be created in a minor key, and the notion of "beginning," scored in the Chinese ideogram, actually acquires its opposite meaning on the metaphorical level of Western figurality. That is because the beginning of autumn implies the onset of decay and the relentless approach of death. It is noteworthy that the juxtaposition of different cultural systems that are attempted in the poem suggests the possibility of multiple interpretations, each time depending on the cultural and ethnic background of the interpreter as well as on his personal experience. The variants themselves are likely to differ radically, and it is this quality of Suknaski's work which makes it especially attractive.

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[144] Suknaski, Andrew. *Writing on Stone: Poem Drawings 1966-76* (Wood Mountain: ANAK press, 1976), n. pag.

[145] Suknaski, Andrew. "Statement: Rose Far in the East," *Writing on Stone: Poem drawings 1966-76*, n. pag.

[146] Bohn, Willard. *The Aesthetics of Visual Poetry: 1914-1928*, 56.

[147] Fellosa, Ernest. *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*. Ed. Ezra Pound. (San Francisco: City Lights, 1968), 10.

Suknaski "Toronto's Subway 'Old Mill'"[148] (Fig. 269), which neither contains Ukrainian-language elements nor examines ethnic themes, may be of interest for the present study insofar as it provides a deeper insight into the poet's technique which unmistakably resembles here the style of the well-known Canadian visual poet Bill Bissett. In none of Suknaski's ethnically-oriented poems is this influence so obvious. Judging from the title

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[148] Suknaski, Andrew. *Old Mill* (Vancouver: blewointmentpress, 1972), n pag.

"Toronto's Subway 'Old Mill'" the poem appears to suggest a focus on the urban landscape. "The Old Mill" in Toronto refers to the picturesque ruins of an old mill in Humber Village, which has given the name to a near-by restaurant and subway station in Toronto's west end. The reader probably does not have difficulty in recognizing the schematic contours in the centre of the page as the outline of the some urban edifice. The poem, however, is not meant to appear as a landscape or as any descriptive exposition. The key to the poem lies in the short verse at the bottom right corner, which reads as follows, "OLD MILL filling th MIND like th brief glimpse of an OLD ELF." This metaphorical verbal image apparently sets the minor-key to the work, which is than intensified by visual means, through the sad expression of an eye and a sketchy face. The interpenetration of the literary medium by non-verbal media is noticeable at the textual level, as the discourse itself shows some attempts to put visual accents, and to a certain extent sound ones,alongside the semantical. Thus, the key-words "OLD MILL," "MIND" and "OLD ELF" are written in block letters, while the definite articles are spelled without an "e" in the orthographic style commonly associated with Bill Bissett. Furthermore, the verbal expression "old mill" expands to encompass the signified at the visual level. It is used as a basic unit for rendering the visual message in the central part of the work. The recognizable features of the stylized face (suggesting that of an old elf) are partially depicted by the successions of this linguistic unit, visually organized in vertical columns and horizontal lines which simultaneously shape the schematized edifice. It is possible to suggest that, as a visual element, the word-combination "old mill" is not meant for reading, but the image it projects acquires its ideographic value when it is embraced at a single glance. Thus, it cannot be perceived as a pure graphical device (like the streaks, which outline the face of the elf, his eye and lips), because it still preserves its semantic properties when used as an element in creating the visual image.

The interplay of visual and verbal meanings in Suknaski's poem does not deprive the textual aspect of its primary importance. The visual message cannot be decoded completely without the verse at the bottom right corner: only the text hints at the possibility of identifying the sad face, which partially frames the poem, with that of an old elf. Due to the fact, however, that the image of the old elf is derived from the key notion of the "old mill" at both the visual and verbal levels, the poem can be viewed as a kind of tautological construct.

Suknaski should also be regarded as one of the few practitioners who attempts to translate visual poetry, which in most cases is resistant to translation. His work, "Sea Gull – God's Bikini"[149] (Fig. 270) is a literal translation of the concrete poem by Andrei Voznesenkii, discussed in the previous chapter (Fig. 51).[150] In his further manipulation of the idea of God's bikini Suknaski still makes reference to its inventor (Fig. 271), although the new variant of the work may have several different readings, neither of which conveys accurately Voznesenskii's concept.[151]

As has already been mentioned Suknaski's more conventional poems also engage in experiments with the layout. In the poem "Kosmach" (Fig. 272), for instance, dedicated to the imprisoned Ukrainian dissident, Valentyn Moroz, the ornamental figure of a ram is inserted into the poetic fabric, since the ram is one of the crucial poetic symbols in the poem:

ram
hutsul symbol
for leadership
and strength
in face of
adversity.[152]

Along with the insertion of the pictorial image amid the poetic lines, Suknaski creates situations where the structural elements of the text are divorced from the traditional sentence-matrix. The necessity of isolating and emphasizing Ukrainian words, given in their English transliteration (*baran* meaning "ram," *pysanka* denoting the Ukrainian for Easter egg) is realised through their italicization. The same technique is used in some other poems of Suknaski, namely "Cornelius Warkentin,"[153] "Tulova/1979," a poem without any formal dedication but written in honour of the Canadian writer of Ukrainian descent Myrna Kostash,[154] "Vazylyna's retreat,"[155] or "Hurakan" (Fig. 273),[156] the latter identified as a "Ukrainian sound poem in spring." The author, however, does not always attempt to underscore visually Ukrainian words; nor does he necessarily provide them with the English translation. In the poem "Arson Gosselin"[157] the Ukrainian word *vovk* is italicized and accompanied by its English translation "wolf" only when it appears in the discourse for the first time. Ten more times the same word is used without being emphasized either verbally (by translation) or visually. In "Alexander Czornucha" the Ukrainian phrase *didko... aby ioho shliak trafyv... kholera*!" (which can be rendered as "the deuce a pox upon him. . . damn!"), which is indented into the body of the poem, is neither translated nor graphically stressed.

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[149] Suknaski, Andrew. *Writing on Stone: Poem drawings 1966-76*, n. pag.

[150] Voznesenskii, Andrei. *Ten zvyka* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1970), 163.

[151] Suknaski, Andrew. *Writing on Stone: Poem drawings 1966-76*, n. pag.

[152] Andrew Suknaski. *The Land They Gave Away: New and Selected Poems* (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1982), 72.

[153] Suknaski, 75-76.

Another characteristic feature of Suknaski's conventional poems is their employment of the "stepladder line" invented at the beginning of the century by the Russian Futurist, Vladimir Maiakovskii. Suknaski, however, does not confine himself to this particular device, but often resorts to the use of boldface, italics, hyphenation between letters, capitalization, one-word lines and other means of heightening visual impact, as in his above-mentioned poems "Tulova/1979," "Vazylyna's retreat," "Hurakan," and others. The visual effects are utilized in the majority of Suknaski's poems, irrespective of whether the poet is dealing with Ukrainian, English-Canadian or Chinese material. It is important to note that Suknaski, being preoccupied with visual expressiveness, is concerned with the letter as a visual entity but does not attempt to treat its graphic dimensions as plastic and variable.

Of interest to this discussion are the poems by the deceased Volodimir Barabash, written in English and Ukrainian in a quaint script (which resembles the typography of Old Ukrainian texts), that is richly ornamental. Whatever poetic merits Barabash's texts may have, each of his poems, written on foolscap, creates an impressive visual image (Fig. 274-275).[158]

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[154] Suknaski, 77-79.

[155] Suknaski, 87-88.

[156] Suknaski, 89-91.

[157] Suknaski, 142-143.

[158] Barabash, Volodymyr. Unpublished manuscript, n. pag.

Thus, "every small letter O is a diamond with a small circle in the middle; every capital T is a teepee with a bar across the top, every small T is finished with a miniature cross motif; and every small I is dotted with a star."[159] It is certainly debatable whether Barabash's poems can be classified as visual poetry, or merely eccentric calligraphy. Since the quaint script, invented by the author, is important for the artistic perception of his work as a whole, I would argue that Barabash's poems may be included in the category of visual poetry.

Zinovii Berezhan (the pen name of the Ukrainian émigré writer Zinovii Shtokalko, 1920-1968, who lived in New York since 1952) cannot be referred to as a visual poet in a the strict sense. Nonetheless, his experiments with rhyme, sound, word play are also complimented by his exploration of visual expressivity. Berezhan's poetic legacy remained unpublished with only a few poems included in the anthology of modern Ukrainian poetry *Koordynaty* (*Co-ordinates*). The poem "Pavuk"[160] ("Spider," fig. 276) was published in this anthology without much concern for its configuration and visual dimensions; as a result, the whole body of the poem was torn apart to appear on three consecutive pages. The dynamics of the poem and its consistent graphical movement were partially lost, as well as the integrity of the visual image. Berezhan's "Pavuk" is explicitly metonymical on the nondiscursive level, but the author attempts to visualize the path of the spider rather than the physical contour of the insect. Such a layout is motivated by the rhythm and trajectory of the spider's movement and is more appropriate than the common linear progression of lines. The ladder structure of the forth and fifth lines with the emphasized pauses between words suggests the spider's cautious manoeuvres and his recurring hitches before the next step, as is characteristic of the creature on its guard. The one letter column exemplifies his pouncing down, and pendulum-shaped letter arrangement symbolizes his getting into a swing. Two capitalized words *TYSHA* modified by an attribute *mertvetska*, which means "deathly silence" (in the second word of the combination each letter is separated by hyphen for a decelerated reading or pronunciation), and arranged in a zig-zag manner *REHIT* ("laughter" or "roar" given in the form of the genitive case *rehotu*) stand for the identification of the aural expression conveyed by the layout. In addition, the unorthodox word arrangement of the noun "rehit" probably suggests an attempt to visualize peals of laughter as well. Inasmuch as the text of Berezhan's poem describes the spider's actions and behaviour its visual devices are used primarily to supplement the discursive ones. "Pavuk" is the only known visual piece of the American poet. No other visual works of Berezhan have been published or recorded, although they might exist among the poet's unpublished materials.

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[159] Faulkner, Flore-Anne. "Poet, Volodimir Barabash Busy Travelling, Writing" *The Chronicle Journal* (Thunder Bay) 10 March (1976): 5.

[160] Boychuk, Bohdan, and Rubchak, Bohdan, eds. *Koordynaty: Antolohiia sychasnoi ukrainskoi poezii na Zakhodi.* Vol. 2. (n.p.: Suchasnist, 1969), 219-21.

Another American writer and poet, Hanna Cherin, occasionally demonstrates some interest in visual experimentation. Thus, she authored a palindromic verse "with punctuation marks and some meaning" titled "Tupak i kaput."[161] This poem was included in the anthology of contemporary Ukrainian avant-darde poetry *Almanakh Liter-A* as the only work by the American visual practitioner. To date there is no more recent record of any form of visual writing in Ukrainian composed by Americans of Ukrainian descent.

As it can be seen, despite a relatively short period of modern evolution, Ukrainian visual poetry – irrespective of the county of its creation – represents an impressive achievement. Even the brief analysis of the most remarkable tendencies of its development persuades us that this genre – neglected for centuries in Ukraine and relatively new for the American continent – reveals a diversity of forms, technical resources and the aesthetic concepts. Many of these forms have long tradition in Ukrainian literature. These traditions are successfully synthesized with the contemporary concepts and innovative techniques in works by Ukrainian authors as well as by diaspora writers, although it would be erroneous to state that national heritage is the most important informative factor for their creativity. Although exceptions will certainly be found, Ukrainian visual poets on the whole exhibit a better awareness and appreciation of the cultural heritage than most Russian practitioners. It is obvious that interest in the national cultural legacy has been largely stimulated by Independence, which Ukraine gained in 1991, as well as by the arduous and demanding process of state construction. For this reason, for instance, many of the works by Ukrainian authors exemplify strong social, political or national commitment, while Russian visual poetry is not socially engaged to the same extent. The independent status of Ukraine has also promoted closer ties with Ukrainians living abroad; and the dynamic economic and cultural exchange has beene extremely beneficial for the Ukrainian literati, and helpful for the authors in diaspora as well. Perhaps the creative output of the authors of krainian descent living in the West should not be identified as part of Ukrainian culture; however, the integration of the individual creative efforts into the national and global cultural context is an important factor for individual and collective cultural development.

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[161] *Almanakh Liter-A*, 28-29.

It is not surprising that the works of Ukrainian visual poets have been fairly well received by members of the general public, whether in their own countries or abroad, who find them accessible and entertaining. The visual dimension of this type of poetry gives it greater immediacy and greater impact than that of conventional poetry. It also provides a richer reading experience.[162] Visual poetry cannot be just read, it is to be reconstructed, decoded, reinvented by the reader, who, due to the absence of a semantically complicated text, is freed from the constraints of discursive logic. The low level of language proficiency – a very serious factor preventing the comprehension of conventional poetry and literature in general by non-native speakers of the language – in many cases does not seriously influence the possibility of understanding and admiring the visual piece. This makes visual poetry in Ukrainian appealing and attractive for both a national and an international audience.

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[162] Willard Bohn, *The Aesthetics of Visual Poetry: 1914-1928*, 67.

# CHAPTER 4. VISUAL POETRY: SOME ASPECTS OF SEMIOTICS AND PERCEPTION.

Although it has a long history of evolution, contemporary visual poetry still enthusiastically reforms or undermines established traditions rather than consecutively developing them. The critical approach to its traditional heritage, exemplified by contemporary visual poetry, seems to be a universal phenomenon. Even in Ukraine, in which for the first time in the past three centuries the national cultural legacy has finally received recognition and support, the traditions of national visual writing, well-known to many of the contemporary visual poets, are not among the the most informative factors of their own creativity. It is obvious that new challenges require new means of expression, and visual poetry is one of them. It undoubtedly reflects the universal tendency towards visualization, and therefore is often identified as one of the hallmarks of our age.[1] Previous generations of writers and artists also responded to changing reality by developing and adopting new means of expression, although their experimentation has not been as radical as that of contemporary practitioners. Baroque poets, for instance, made a tremendous step forward from the ornamented or even visualised text of medieval culture to pattern poetry. Yet they did not doubt that "the meaning of the word is determined entirely by its context,"[2] whether the postulate is applicable to conventional, curious or emblematic poetry. By and large Baroque visual poetry is governed by rigid and strict rules (meticulously described and elaborated in the numerous *Poetics* of the time), which allow a great flexibility as far as the form and dimensions of the text are concerned, but not at the expense of the word understood as a static unit, conveying definite meaning or a set of meanings to be realised in the immanently temporal language context.[3]

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[1] Bohn, Willard. *The Aesthetics of Visual Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 1.

[2] Vološinov, V. N. *Marxism and Philosophy of Language*. Trans. L. Matejka and I. R. Titunuk (New York; London: Seminar Press, 1973), 79.

[3] In his lectures of 1904-1905 Edmund Husserl stresses that the language context is ruled by the same principles as any temporal object. See: Husserl, Edmund "Zur Phānomenologie des Inneren

The significance of the linear-temporal aspect of the word for the first time was questioned by Futurists and Constructivists, and the latter offer more radical and sophisticated solutions to the problem than Futurists, at least in Russia (Ukrainian avant-gardists were far behind their Russian colleagues in this respect). Chicherin's claim that for poetic purposes a word can be successfully replaced by pictures, pictograms, ideograms, etc., that is, objects either without distinct temporal characteristics or with synthesized temporal-spatial dimensions is, in fact, a radical turn to the recognition of the spatial aspect of the discourse as its crucial component. Had Chicherin and other avant-gardists had an opportunity to elaborate the theoretical fundamentals of their creative principles, many concepts and ideas regarding visual poetry which emerged in the 1950-60s would probably have been expressed several decades earlier. Unfortunately, neither Chicherin nor his colleagues were given the chance.

The concept of visual syntax (which previously attracted Ezra Pound, probably under the influence of Ernest Fellonosa[4]) was clearly articulated in the 1950-60s by the members of the Noiganders group from Brazil and by the German Concretists. A visual poem, as the Noiganders group formulates it, "is an object in and by itself, not an interpreter of exterior objects and/or more or less subjective feeling."[5] As Eugen Gomringer argues, it is "simple and can be perceived visually as a whole as well as in its parts. It becomes an object to be both seen and used."[6] Gomringer's claim that, in visual (or concrete) poetry the accumulation, distribution, analysis, synthesis and arrangement of linguistic signs do not follow established laws, but, in fact, challenge them,[7] provides grounds for semiotic and (post)structural

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Zeitbewußtseins," *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Phänomenologie Forschung.* Ed. Martin Heidegger, V. IX (1928).

[4] See: Fellonosa, Ernest. *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry.* Ed. Ezra Pound. (San Francisco: City Lights Book, 1936).

[5] Campos, Augusto de; Pignatari, Decio; Campos, Haroldo de. "Pilot Plan for Concrete Poetry." Solt, Mary Ellen, ed. *Concrete Poetry: A World View.* (Bloomington; London: Indiana University Press, 1968), 72.

[6] Gomringer, Eugen. "From Line to Constellation." Solt, Mary Ellen, ed. *Concrete Poetry: A World View,* 67.

[7] Gomringer, Eugen. "Concrete Poetry." Solt, Mary Ellen., ed. *Concrete Poetry: A World View,* 67.

explorations along this line, which, however, have been neither exhaustive nor sufficient.

Having recognized that visual poetry differs from conventional poetic discourse, inasmuch as it is structured accordingly to "the dictates of visual imagination,"[8] scholars have attempted to look more closely at visual poetry as a phenomenon utilizing the dual sign and therefore operating with two sets of the signifiers and the signified. Although visual poetry incorporates works of various subtypes and subgenres, it is generally accepted that common characteristic and regularities of the form do exist. Thus, visual poetry either is typically nondiscursive or exemplifies the elliptical, paratactical, or just minimal discourse, although in every language there are instances of full-fledged poetic forms which still belong to the body of visual poetry (lengthy pattern poems by Miroshnychenko and Iov, analyzed in the third chapter, can provide an example). And yet, in every case the relation between form and content is based on the assumption that content is valuable only if "its spiritual and material structure prove to be interesting and can be handled as language."[9] In other words, on this particular basis the definition of the visual poetry at large can be reduced to the previously mentioned formula: "form=content / content=form."[10] Offering its individual solution to the form-content relation problem, each piece of visual poetry illustrates in its individual manner Jacques Derrida's assumption that the written word is an object in its own right.[11] The relation between the two facets of visual poetry (the verbal and the visual) have been a matter of dispute for many years. Mary E. Solt observes that, irrespective of the visual poet's standing with regard to semantics, he resorts to this type of creativity with the conviction that "the old grammatical-syntactical structures are no longer adequate to advanced processes of thought and communication in our time."[12] This urges him "to relieve the poem of [...] its servitude to disciplines outside itself as an object in its own right for its own sake."[13] Siegfried Schmidt attempts to develop the theory behind the German concrete poetry by suggesting that in the optic-semantic field of presentation characteristic of visual poetry a linguistic sign is converted into a grapheme rather than being employed orthographically.[14] The issue of the linguistic sign and its functions in visual poetry presents a special interest for the present study.

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[8] Bohn, Willard. *The Aesthetics of Visual Poetry*, 5.

[9] Gomringer, Eugen. "Concrete Poetry." Solt, Mary Ellen, ed. *Concrete Poetry: A World View*, 68.

[10] Solt, Mary Ellen. *Concrete Poetry: A World View*, 13.

[11] See: Derrida, Jacques. "Differérance," Derrida, Jacques. *Margins of Philosophy*. Trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 1-27.

[12] Solt, Mary Ellen. *Concrete Poetry: A World View*, 7-8.

At this point it would be relevant to look at Charles Pierce's theory of sign types, which often serves as a basis for further explorations along these lines. Developing a theory of semiotic relation between the material aspect of the sign and its referent, Pierce differentiates three major types of signs: symbols, icons and indices,[15] thus including into his theoretical framework objects (icons and indices) which are not considered by Saussure's semiotics. According to Pierce, the relation between the symbol and its referent is arbitrary. There is no reason other than social convention to link particular phonemes to a particular concept. In their turn, indices are casually or existentially connected with their objects, although, in Pierce's opinion, deitic or anaphoric verbal and non-verbal pointers should be excluded from this category, inasmuch as they are chosen arbitrarily in most cases. The essence of both symbols and indices lies in a relation of contiguity, whether learned or artificial (symbols), or physical (indices). As for iconic signs, they represent objects mainly by similarity, although the notion of similitude, on which the definition relies, is not unproblematic in itself.[16] Pierce singles out two subclasses of icon, that is, images (in which the material aspect represents the simple qualities of its immediate interpretant) and diagrams (in which the likeness between the material aspect and its interpretant exist only in respect to the relations of their parts). As Roman Jacobson argues, in Pierce's semiotic classification "the main difference among the three types of signs is rather in the hierarchy of their properties than in the properties themselves,"[17] inasmuch as in many cases the properties of the one type of sign can be attributed, to a certain extent, to another type of sign as well (painting as a symbolic icon; iconicity of onomatopoeic words, etc.). As a result of comparative analysis of visual and auditory signs based on Pierce's classification Roman Jacobson draws the conclusion that although "both visual and auditory perception obviously occur in space and time, [...] the spatial dimension takes priority for visual signs and the temporal one for auditory signs."[18] Therefore, the language is abundant with symbols but poor in iconic and indexical representation, while painting has an explicit iconic and indexical character.[19] However, as Jacobson argues, the literal translation of a syntactic system into a set of graphs reveals its diagrammatical, iconic form of relations; and so does the combination of morphemes into words. Therefore, "both in syntax and morphology any relation of parts and wholes agrees with Pierce's definition of diagram and their iconic character."[20] In the same way conventional literature, and poetry in particular, achieves iconicity by resorting to diagrams and metaphors.[21]

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[13] Solt, 8.

[14] Schmidt, Siegfried J. "Konkrete Poesie: Ergebnisse und Perspektiven," *Wort und Wahrheit*, 4 (1969): 325-27.

[15] Pierce, Charles S. *Collected Papers*. V. 2. Ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932), 157-58.

[16] Eco, Umberto. *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington; London: Indiana University Press, 1976), 195.

The semiotic situation of visual poetry, admittedly, is somewhat different, inasmuch as visual poetry utilizes all three types of sign on a non-discriminative basis. Moreover, preserving its arbitrary or symbolic character, the linguistic sign may simultaneously acquire iconic and/or indexical characteristics, as happens in discursive lettristic compositions, or in constructivist works in which semantics is used as the ruling principle of typographic decisions. The majority of works by Myroslav Korol, Mykola Soroka and Jars Balan are of this nature. Another important issue which definitely requires a closer examination is so-called nondiscursive or vacuum (according to Rÿ Nikonova's definition) poetry, quite representative in contemporary Russian visual poetry, although works of this type can be found in Ukrainian visual writing as well. Pictographic compositions by Sigei, Nikonova's vacuum poems, Sapgir's "three element" verses, geometrical compositions by Anna Alchuk, Bulatov's graphical compositions, in which individual letters function as indexes and mathematical or musical symbols, and Biriukov's collection "Prolehomeny k 1998" are notably nondiscursive. They may comprise individual letters but do not have a text understood as "language units which have a definable communicative function, characterized by such principles as cohesion, coherence and informativeness."[22] Literature, including poetry, relies on written discourse as its method of composition and transmission, although in most cultures there is a quantitively insignificant body of literature composed and transmitted orally. Visual poetry, however, by no means can be classified as oral literature, and a significant part of it is not suitable for recitation at all. Therefore, like conventional literature it should be considered discursive since the availability of the discourse is a crucial factor for the existence of literature. Nevertheless, nondiscursive visual compositions are considered to be visual poems (that is, works belonging to literature) and not pieces of nonrepresentational art. Thus, a logical question arises regarding the legitimacy of this taxonomic decision. As Ulricht Ernst argues,

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[17] Jacobson, Roman. "Visual and Auditory Sings." *Selected Writings.* Vol. 2. (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), 335.

[18] Jacobson, 336.

[19] According to Charles Morris, the aesthetic sign is "an icon whose designatum is a value." Therefore, value properties are embodied in the aesthetic sign vehicle, and the artist in his creative act moulds the world "nearer to his heart's desire" and presents "the basis for consummatory experiences." See: Morris, Charles. *Writings on the General Theory of Signs.* The Hague: Mouton, 1971, 327, 146.

[20] Jacobson, Roman. "Quest for the Essense of Language," *Selected Writings,* Vol. 2, 352.

[21] Steiner, Wendy. *The Colors of Rhetoric: Problems in the Relation between Modern Literature and Painting* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 22.

> most avant-garde concrete poetry lies outside the bounds of the figured poem. This is true not only for the purely phonetic products of sound poetry, which pose no problem here, but also for the pictorial texts which step over the boundary into graphic art, or again, for constructs whose textual element is not any way mimetic.

Further, the same scholar suggests that the visual poem does not replace the linguistic unit "either wholly or partially [...] with pictures which the reader then has to decode conceptually, but creates a single picture or complex of pictures either solely or primarily by arranging the written text."[23]

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[22] Crystal, David. *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1985), 307.

The notion that the poetic text is more significant than its configuration advocated by more than one scholar in fact excludes a considerable amount of works from the realm of visual poetry; in the case of Russian visual writing the whole body of vacuum poetry should be transferred to the sphere of graphics. And yet this subform of Russian visual poetry is one of the most interesting phenomena in contempoary national literature, which obviously requires a thorough study.

The concept of the privileged status of the verbal over the visual is by no means new, and in fact bring us back to the old assumption that there is only one feasible path for poetry to take, that is, the conventional one. In this light any deviation from traditional poetry is considered a poetic jest unworthy of any serious study. With such an approach to innovative literary phenomena, many unique features of contemporary writing can easily slip past scholarly attention. The semantic property of nondiscursive visual poetry is obviously one of them. A closer look at the usage of non-linguistic material within the framework of the visual poem, however, permits us to notice an interesting regularity. Non-linguistic elements (pictograms, vectors, indices, non-verbal signs) join in diverse ways to form meaningful units, which are semantically related to the verbal ones, provided that the work has a verbal component. Some pictorial elements, like pictograms, may correspond to the individual sentences, but commonly the semantics of the visual elements are of limited nature. In the absence of the verbal component, however, the pictorial elements assume the fullest responsibility for conveying semantic meaning, which may be somewhat vague and obscure, but may also be intelligible. That means that unlike nonrepresentational art, visual poetry (whether discursive or nondiscursive) has a second semiotic function, that is, an informational one, although its application can be considerably limited compared to conventional literary discourse. Although by and large the communication scheme of visual poetry "serves less an understanding of meaning than an understanding of arrangements,"[24] it be would irrelevant to reduce it exclusively to aesthetic communication. The informational function of visual poetry is realised either on the verbal level or through motivated nonverbal associations, or on both. This foreordains its perception as a literary rather than an artistic work solely "intended to be seen like a painting."[25]

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[23] Crystal, 11.

[24] Bense, Max. "Concrete Poetry." Solt, Mary Ellen, ed. *A World Look at Concrete Poetry,* 73.

Therefore, the perceptual pattern utilised by the reader of nondiscursive visual poetry is reminiscent of that realised through the act of textual reading rather than that characteristic of the act of perceiving art. Our observation of the work of art typically starts with the grasping of outstanding structural features or eye-catching colour spots, but further perceptual strategies of the individual observers of the same work of art may vary considerably. Although the correct reading of many representational works of art depends heavily on conventions, which "standardize the way a certain idea is to be depicted,"[26] the sequence of scanning or decoding the pictorial information which reflects or encompasses these conventions is not strictly determined. In nonrepresentational or abstract works very few elements (if any at all) are conventionalized, which leaves even more space for a free subjective way of approaching and comprehending the artistic piece.

The mechanism of perceiving visual poetry incorporates some elements of both – the determinant sequence of arrangement, characteristic of the act of conventional text reading and the perceptible arbitrariness of observing art. The semantic information of the visual poem is decoded in a manner akin to conventional reading patterns, although the necessity of following the conventional linear left-to-right sequence in most cases is not imposed on the reader. Here the sequence of the reader's perception is structured by the form itself, the latter having a wide spectrum of structural varieties. In both discursive (especially with reduced language) and nondiscursive visual compositions the sequence of logical and associative relations to be decoded conceptually is predominantly signalled by the structure. By rejecting the old grammatical-syntactical patterns, visual poetry has been developing new communicative models, more motivated and structurally oriented[27] and yet semantically impregnated. These new communicative patterns can be synthesized with the conventional discursive elements (extended or reduced), or used on their own, as happens in nondiscursive poems. In this case the perception of the message is determined by the form itself; line and letter arrangement and governing devices like arrows and vectors are the most productive means of the material organization (for example, Sigei's "Comma Poem" is linearly arranged as a poem with some noticeable poetic properties; Nikonova's vacuum poems utilize vectors and arrows to set the direction of the processing work). In addition, the reader of visual poetry may select his own entrance to the work or try more than one, thus attempting to read the poem as polysemantic work. If the composition implies the possibility of multiple readings, incorporated clues typically suggest such a multiplicity.

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[25] Solt, Mary Ellen. *A World Look at Concrete Poetry*, 7.

[26] Arnheim, Rudolf. *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye* (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press), 1974.

In general, visual poetry stimulates more active interaction between the reader and the work than conventional literature does. It is known that the fulfilment of the act of reading "takes place not in the text, but in the reader, who must 'activate' the interplay of the correlates"[28] prestructured by the sequence of textual elements. The reader of visual poetry deals simultaneously with the pictorial and textual correlates, and besides handling the wandering viewpoint[29] of the discourse (considerably reduced, of course) or its nondiscursive substitute, is supposed to establish a subject-object relationship, characteristic of the perception of art. The latter, on the one hand, requires at least some minimal understanding of shape, form, balance, space and other essential identificators of iconicity. But on the other hand, these artistic qualities allow more room for the games of the reader's imagination. The fact that visual poetry employs all three types of signs also increases the creative efforts and synthetizing activity on the part of the reader, inasmuch as their incorporation into the particular piece does not necessarily lead to the harmonious equilibrium among them. Since the semiotics of language and the semiotics of art are different in their basic characteristics, it is possible to suggest that a dialectical tension existing between the two media joined within the framework of the same artifact is inevitable and should be regarded as an important feature of visual poetry. Although the two sign systems unquestionably enrich one another, the relation between them may not be that simple and may vary significantly depending on the individual properties of the subgenre or the work itself. Thus, the correlation between the visual and the verbal in optic-semantical tautologies is not of the same nature as that of nondiscursive or lettristic pieces, or even works exemplifying a competition between metaphoric and metonymical planes.

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[27] Bense, Max. "Concrete Poetry." Solt, Mary Ellen. *Concrete Poetry: A World View*, 73.

[28] Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. (Baltimore; London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1978), 110.

[29] Iser, 109.

It is clear that visual poetry, especially the contemporary kind, poses many theoretical and practical questions which have to be addressed. And yet it would be erroneous to view visual poetry as a kind of esoteric literature, attainable by a very limited and highly sophisticated readership. The fact that it mainly resorts to reduced language and widely utilizes pictorial means of universal denotation and connotation, turns the national habitat of visual poetry into an international one. As Eugen Gomringer claims, new communicative means employed by visual poetry, and reduced language in particular, in general lead to "the achievements of greater flexibility and freedom of communication."[30] As he further argues, "the resulting poem should be, if possible, as easily understood as signs in airports and traffic signs.[31] According to Max Bense, visual poetry, uniting and combining languages, can even be regarded as the first international poetic movement.[32] Not surpisingly, visual poetry in Russian and Ukrainian, using the Cyrillic alphabet, which is considered a serious barrier for many readers and scholars in the West, has attracted attention and recognition far beyond the borders of the Eastern Slavic world.

As more than one scholar has observed, the process of erasing the boundaries between art and literature and between sign and object is nowhere more evident that in visual poetry.[33] There is no doubt that this form of writing in both Russian and Ukrainian provides readers and researchers with rich and diverse material. It also considerably enriches universal visual writing by reforming national traditions of visual literature and synthesizing them with the modern sensibility of the many countries of its creation.

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[30] Gomringer, Eugen. "The Poem as a Functional Object." Solt, Mary Ellen, ed. *Concrete Poetry: World View,* 69-70.

[31] Gomringer., 70.

[32] Bense, Max. "Concrete Poetry." Solt, Mary Ellen. *Concrete Poetry: World View,* 73.

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[33] Steiner, Wendy. *The Colors of Rhetoric,* 218; Bohn, Willard. *The Aesthetics of Visual Poetry,* 8.

# CONCLUSIONS

The phenomena of visual poetry in Russian and Ukrainian have both common and distinctive features. Their common characteristics are conditioned by kindred ethnicity and three hundred years of collective historical and cultural experience of Russians and Ukrainians (which obviously has a different meaning for each nation). In terms of its sources, Russian visual poetry sprouted from the Ukrainian medieval and Baroque experience of visual writing (which in its turn was stimulated by Byzantine and Roman cultures); and ever since, the development of visual poetry in both countries has been characterized by continuous interaction and mutual influence.

The divergencies between the two phenomena predominantly reflect two different cultural paradigms they operate within and therefore exemplify. Generally speaking, Russian culture is undergoing a painful period of replacing the imperial stereotypes with national values. This process is by no means a rapid one, inasmuch as it requires the conscious revalorization of many important issues as well as the drawing up of new ideological perspectives. The process itself may be encouraging or discouraging for collective or individual creative endeavour. Although many young and gifted poets extensively incorporate visual experimentation in their works, the impressive achievements of the "Uktuss school," the Transfurist group or the other avant-garde amalgamation founded by Ry Nikonova and Sergei Sigei in the 1960-1970s remain unsurpassed. No doubt, the recent emigration of these well-regarded and productive visualists to Germany has seriously weakened the national and international standing of Russian visual poetry.

In its turn, Ukrainian culture, which is considered a powerful instrument of national revival, struggles with its postcolonial tendencies and simultaneously contends for international recognition. Not surprisingly, visual poetry by Ukrainian practitioners (Soroka, Korol, Sarma-Sokolovskyi, to mention only a few) is more socially and politically oriented than the literary production of their Russian colleagues. For its immediate dynamic reaction to dramatic and subtle changes in reality, Ukrainian visual poetry can easily be compared to a sensitive barometer. It is obvious that an explicit nationalist orientation is characteristic of many socially engaged works of Ukrainian visualists.

Another important feature that should be mentioned is a strong cooperative spirit of Ukrainian visualists, who have established stable personal and professional ties and successfully participate in many collective projects, some of which have been briefly outlined in the previous chapters. Russian visualists, however, seem to be less organised and cooperative. Besides, for the Russian authors residing outside the two major cities, Moscow and St. Petersburg, productive cultural cooperation with their colleagues remains problematic. This does not mean, however, that the creative output of the provincial authors is of less significance. But the fact that they face many challenges unknown to dwellers of the big cities has to be recognized.

Although the visual practitioners who use Russian and Ukrainian in their creative work reside in many countries of the world, the only visual poetry in Russian is created by authors with a relatively similar cultural background. Nonetheless, diverse multicultural and ethnic influences of the former Soviet emigration should not be dismissed. During recent years the contacts between Russian visualists and the expatriate communities in the West have been significantly increased and led to notable results. Most Russian expatriate poets use more than one language for their creative activity. And yet cooperation with Russian literati and Russian audiences suggests the possibility of publicizing their works in an environment in which they can be understood and duly appreciated. For Russian visualists these contacts are pivotal means of obtaining the multi- and cross-cultural experience essential for successful integration into the global culture.

Ukrainian visual poets also have their supporters and propagators in the West, although they are not numerous. Besides, very few of them have the same cultural and social experience. Western visual practitioners who resort to the Ukrainian language or themes are predominantly 'hyphenated Ukrainians,' many of whom are of mixed ethnic background. Ukrainian is not their first language of communication, which imposes obvious limitations on its usage for creative purposes. What is important is that visualists in Ukraine and in the West demonstrate better awareness and appreciation of their literary heritage than most Russian practitioners do. This factor obviously influence the creative profile of both national phenomena.

The development of one or another poetic form in a particular language is determined by many factors of national and international significance. Clearly, for Ukrainian practitioners independence has become an important stimulus for the rehabilitation and exploration of their language, which has been undervalued and suppressed for decades. Visual poetry aimed at broad-scale polyartistic experimentation is one of the most efficient tools for exploring various dimensions of the language. In addition, the Ukrainian tradition of visual and linguistic literature provides the contemporary national poets with lavish material. Many popular forms of the Baroque writing (labyrinths, palindromes, puzzle poems, acrostics, emblematic poems, etc.) are inventively modified or synthesized by contemporary Ukrainian practitioners to be successfully adapted to new creative objectives. Among Russian visual poets experimentation with well-established forms of visual writing is not so popular.

What visual poetry in either of the countries seriously lacks is a theorization of its experience, aesthetics and poetics. Most Russian and Ukrainian scholarship on this kind of writing is descriptive rather than analytical. It is obvious that in the absence of a comprehensive history of either Ukrainian or Russian visual poetry even synoptic overviews of the most remarkable achievements of both traditions can facilitate understanding of the form and its aesthetic properties. And yet scholarly inquiries with a strong theoretical framework would be extremely beneficial for the evolution of visual poetry in Russian and Ukrainian, both having unquestionable achievements as well as huge potential to contribute to the global cultural context.

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# APPENDIX I

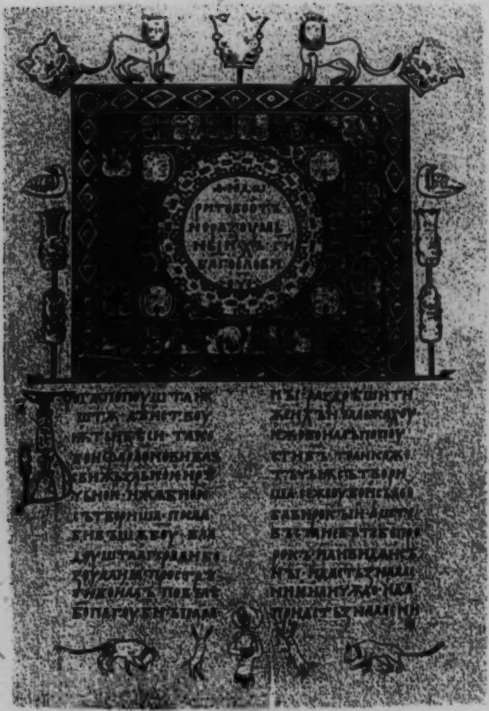


Fig. 1. *Izbornik* of 1073.

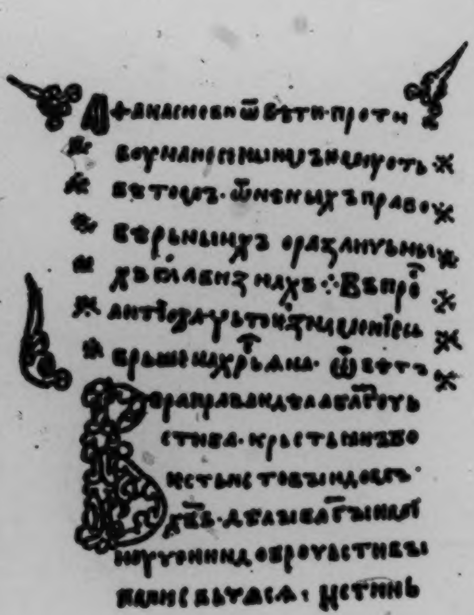


Fig. 2. *Izbornik* of 1076.

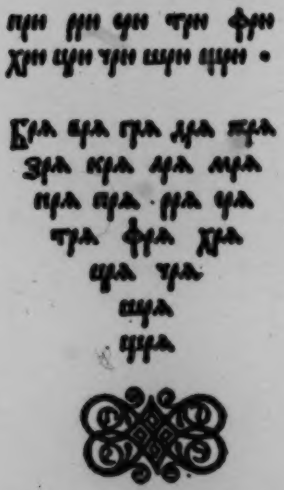


Fig. 3. Ivan Fedorov's *ABC* of 1578.

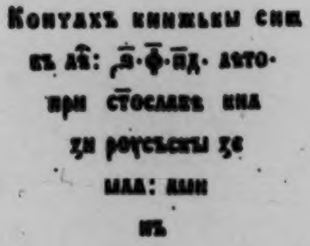


Fig. 4. *Izbornik* of 1076: Funnel-like ending.

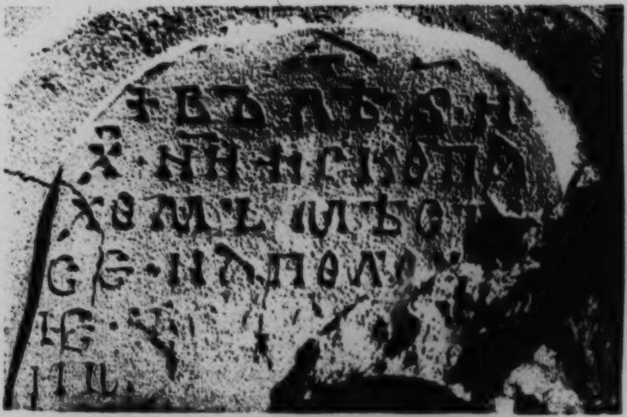


Fig. 5. Gravestone inscription, Kievan Cave Monastery, 1150.

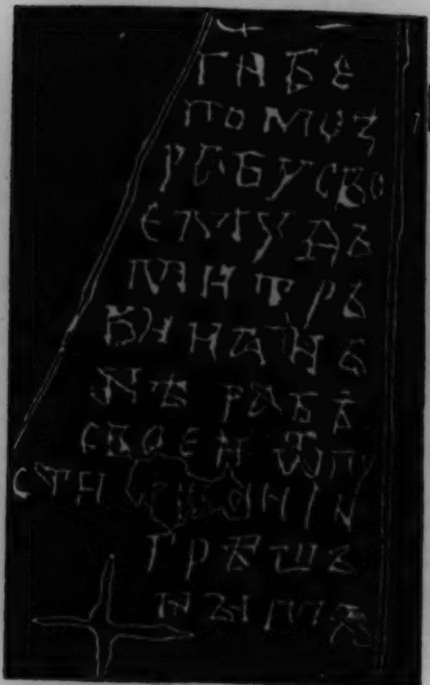


Fig. 6. 12th century framed graffito,
St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv.

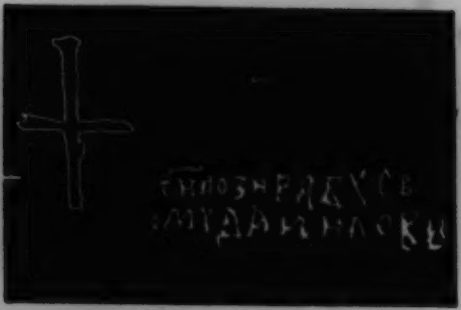


Fig. 7. 13th-14th century graffito
decorated with a cross,
St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv.

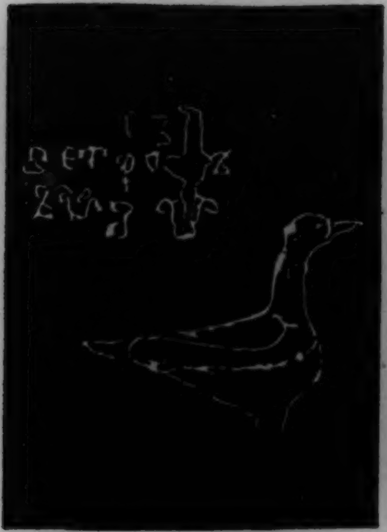


Fig. 8. Inscription with drawing, St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv.

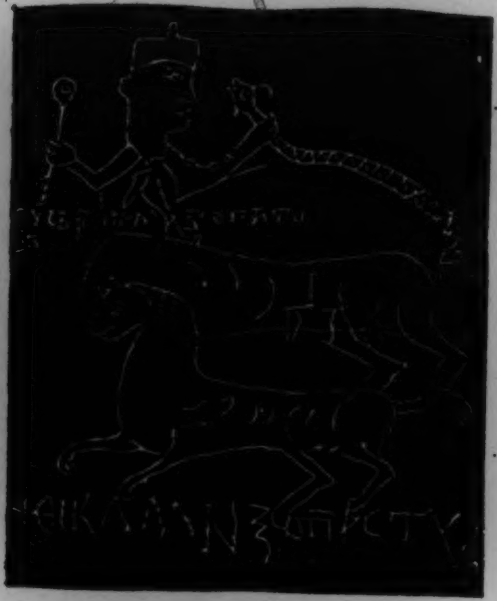


Fig. 9. Composition in the apse of the St. Michael side-altar, St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv.

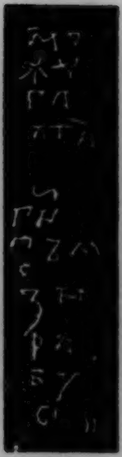


Fig. 10. 12th century vertically arranged graffito, St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv.

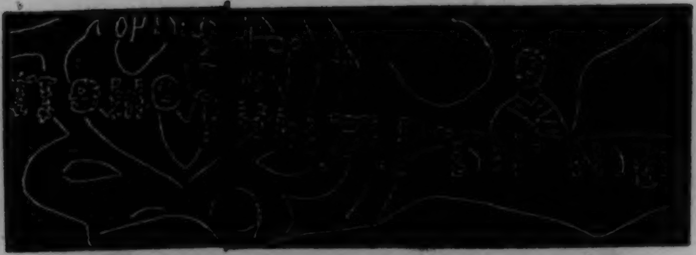


Fig. 11. 12th century graffito written in double-lined letters, St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv.

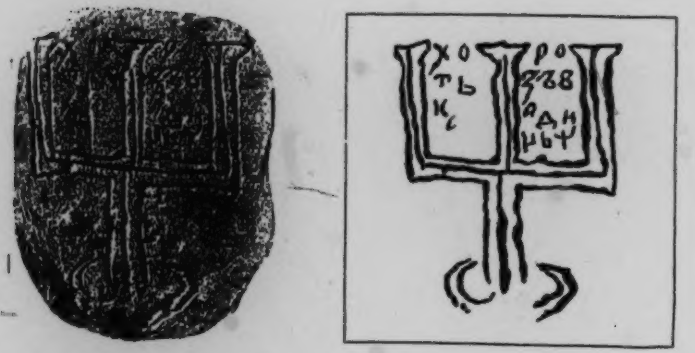


Fig. 12. 13th century
graffito between the spurs of the Kyiv's princes' trident,
St. Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod.

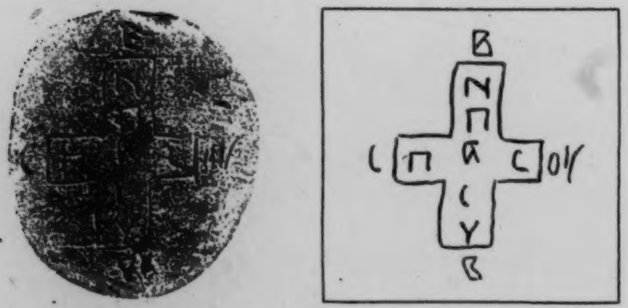


Fig. 13. 13th century
graffito inside the cross
with mutually perpendicular arrangement of words,
St. Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod.

Fig. 14. 11th-12th century
graffito written in everse order,
St. Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod.

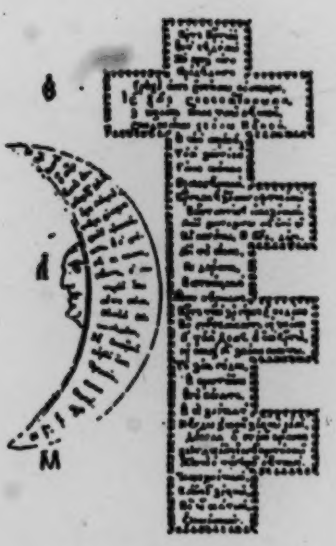


Fig. 15. Stepan Berynda.
"Velykodnii dar" ("Easter Gift").

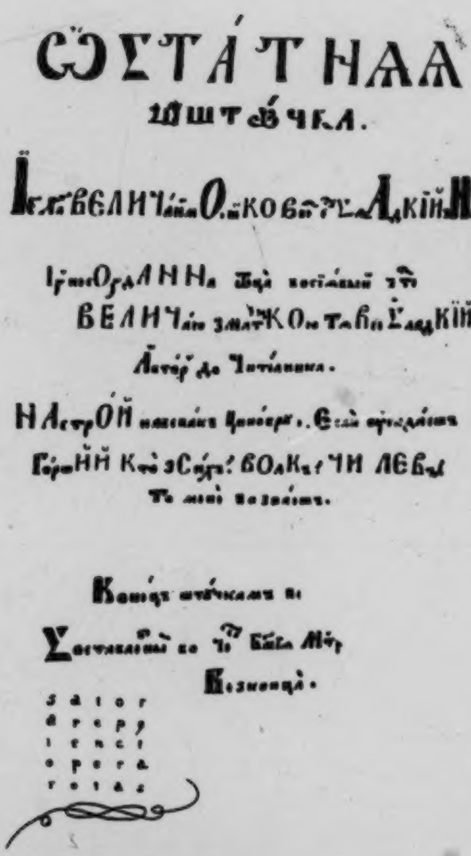


Fig. 17. Ivan Velychkovskyi.
The poem in which the author's name
is written in direct and reverse order.

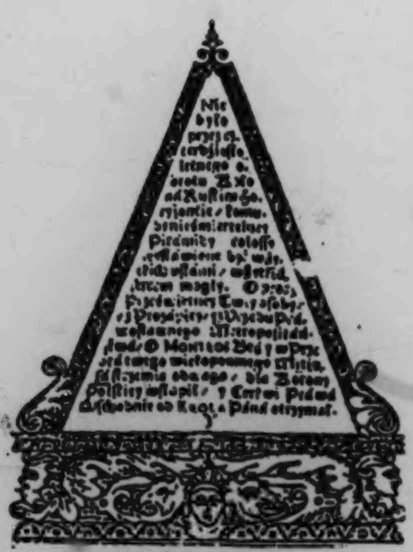


Fig. 16. Figure poem in Latin
by students of the Kyiv Mohyla Collegium.

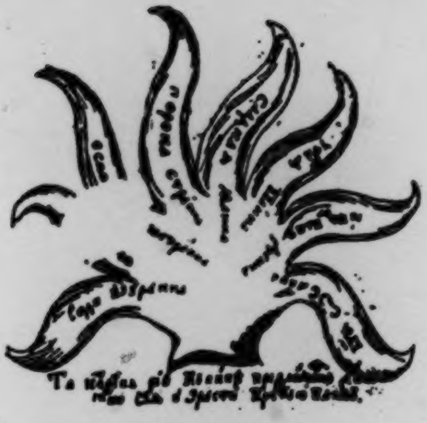


Fig. 18. Ivan Velychkovskyi.
Poem in the shape of flames.

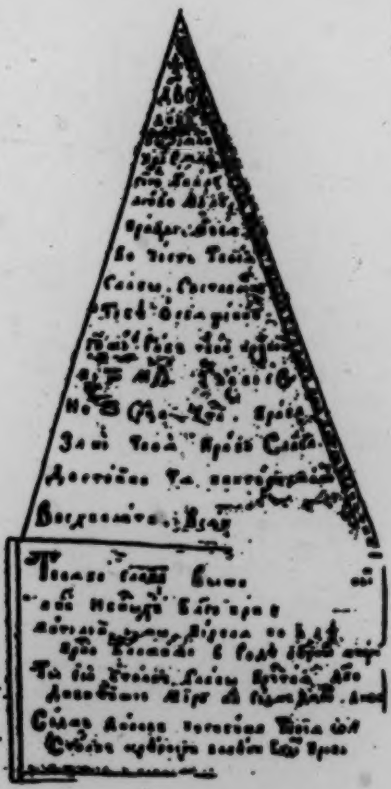
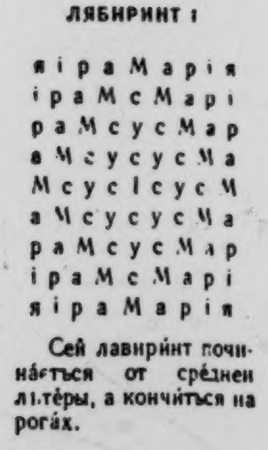


Fig. 19. Ivan Velychkovskyi.
Poem in the shape of a pyramid.

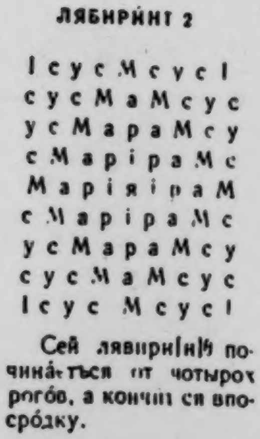


**ЛЯБИРИНТ 1**

я і р а М а р і я
і р а М с М а р і
р а М с у с М а р
а М с у с у с М а
М с у с І с у с М
а М с у с у с М а
р а М с у с М а р
і р а М с М а р і
я і р а М а р і я

Сей лавиринт почина́єтъся от сре́днеи лıтёры, а кончи́тъся на рога́х.

Fig. 20. Ivan Velychkovskyi. Labyrinth poem.

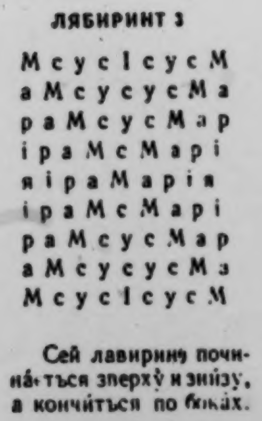


**ЛЯБИРИ́НТ 2**

І с у с М с у с І
с у с М а М с у с
у с М а р а М с у
с М а р і р а М с
М а р і я і р а М
с М а р і р а М с
у с М а р а М с у
с у с М а М с у с
І с у с М с у с І

Сей лявири[н]ѳ почина́єтъся от чотырох рого́в, а кончит ся впосро́дку.

Fig. 21. Ivan Velychkovskyi. Labyrinth poem.

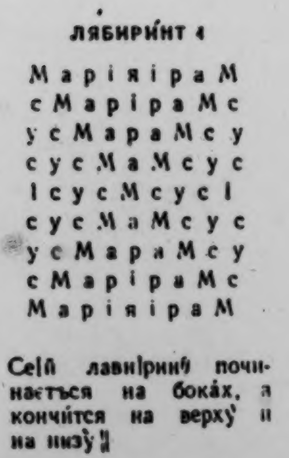


**ЛЯБИРИНТ 3**

М с у с І с у с М
а М с у с у с М а
р а М с у с М а р
і р а М с М а р і
я і р а М а р і я
і р а М с М а р і
р а М с у с М а р
а М с у с у с М а
М с у с І с у с М

Сей лавиринѳ почина́єтъся зверху̑ и знизу, а кончи́тъся по бока́х.

Fig. 22. Ivan Velychkovskyi. Labyrinth poem.



**ЛЯБИРИ́НТ 4**

М а р і я і р а М
с М а р і р а М с
у с М а р а М с у
с у с М а М с у с
І с у с М с у с І
с у с М а М с у с
у с М а р а М с у
с М а р і р а М с
М а р і я і р а М

Се[й] лави[р]инѳ почина́єтъся на бока́х, а кончи́тся на верху̓ и на низу̓.

Fig. 23. Ivan Velychkovskyi. Labyrinth poem.

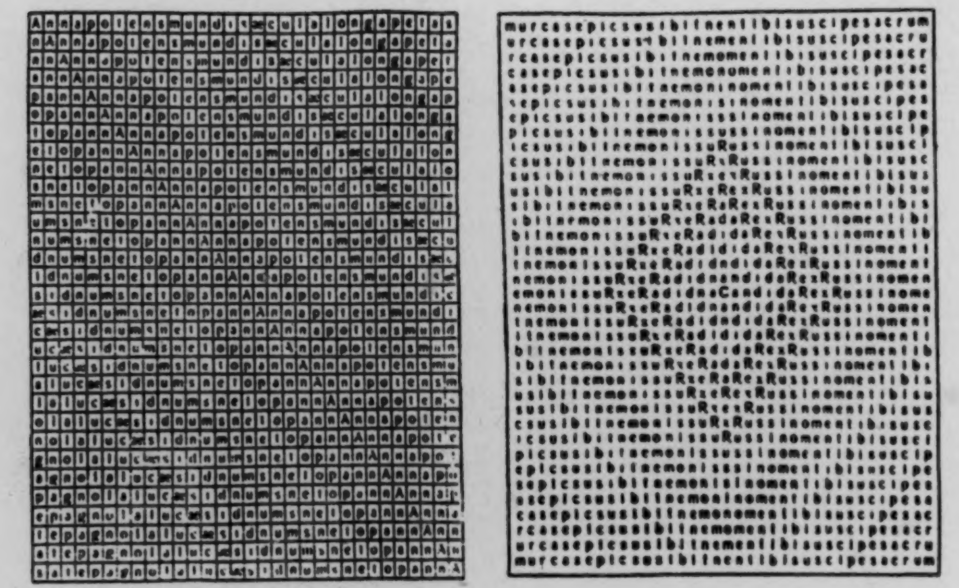


Fig. 24-25. Mytrofan Dovholevskyi. Labyrinth poems.

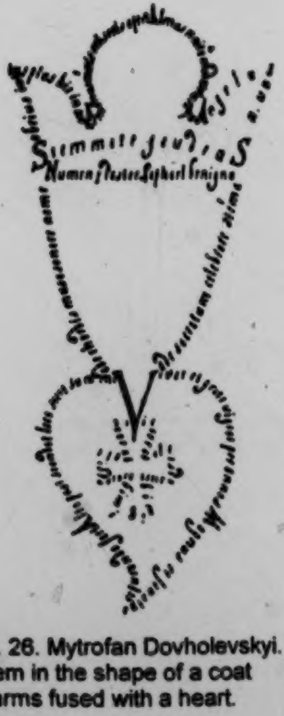


Fig. 26. Mytrofan Dovholevskyi.
Poem in the shape of a coat
of arms fused with a heart.

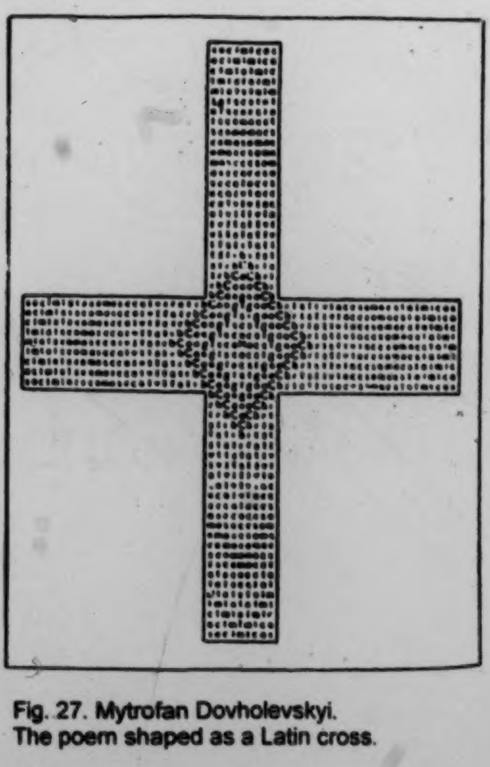


Fig. 27. Mytrofan Dovholevskyi.
The poem shaped as a Latin cross.

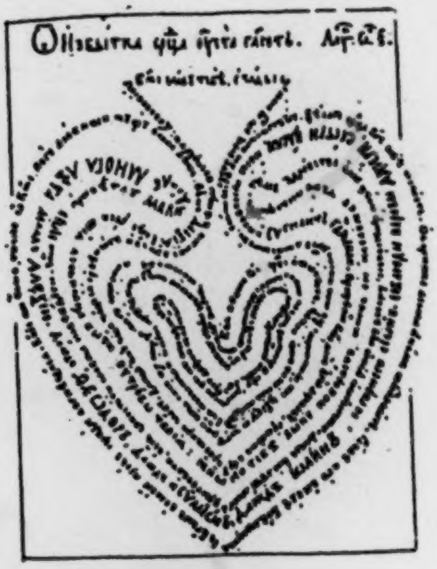


Fig. 28. Simeon Polotskii.
Heart-shaped poem.

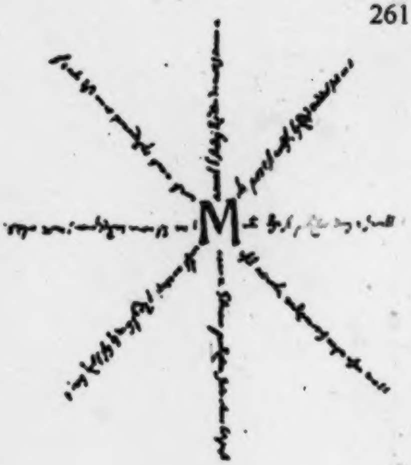


Fig. 30. Simeon Polotskii.
Poem in the shape of a sun.

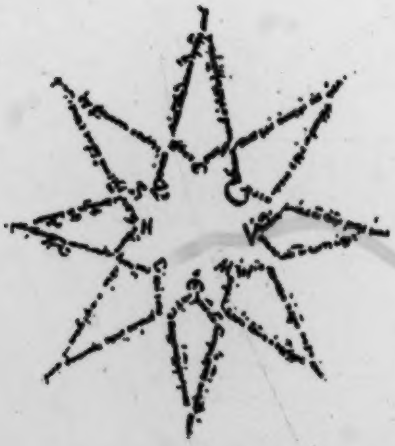


Fig. 29. Simeon Polotskii.
Star-shaped poem.

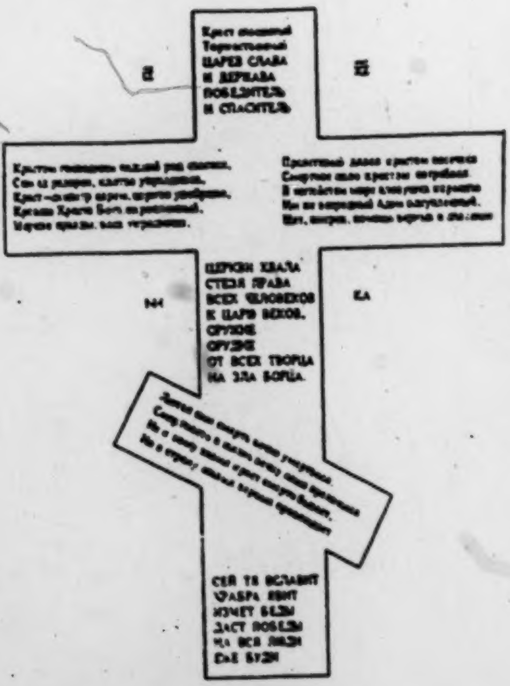

ЦАРЕЙ СЛАВА
И ДЕРЖАВА
ПОБЕДИТЕЛЬ
И СПАСИТЕЛЬ
ЦЕРКВИ ХВАЛА
СТЕЗЯ ПРАВА
ВСЕХ ЧЕЛОВЕКОВ
К ЦАРЮ ВЕКОВ.
ОРУЖИЕ
ОРУЖИЕ
ОТ ВСЕХ ТВОРЦА
НА ЗЛА БОРЦА.

Fig. 31. Simeon Polotskii.
Poem in the shape of a cross.

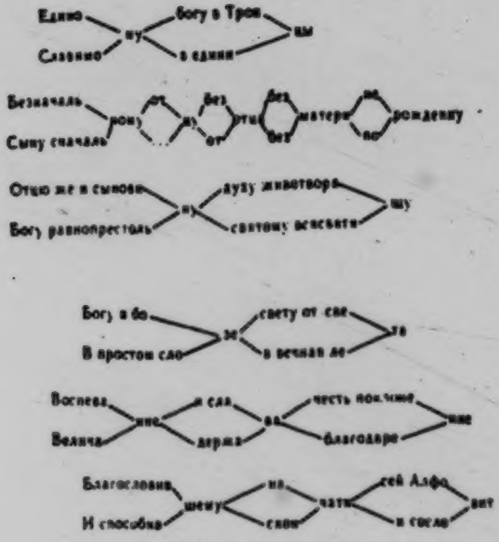

Едино
Славно
ну
богу в Трои
в едини
цы
Безначаль
Сыну сначаль
без
от
без
без
матери
рожденну
Отцю же и сынови
Богу равнопресталь
ну
духу животворя
святому всесвяти
шу
Богу и бо
В простом сло
же
свету от све
в вечная ве
те
Воспева
Велича
ние
и сла
держа
ва
честь поклоне
благодаре
ние
Благословна
И способна
шему
на
слов
чати
сей Алфа
в слове
вит

Fig. 32. Monk Evstratii.
Coordinated poem.

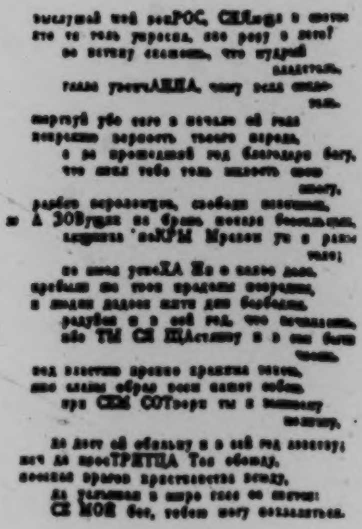
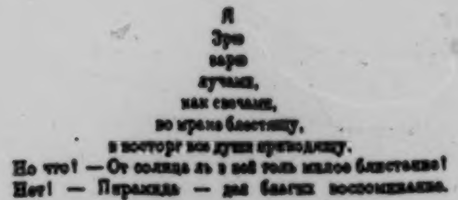


Fig. 33. Mikhail Sobakin.
Poem with emphasized letters.



Я
Зрю
зарю
лучами,
как свечами,
во мраке блестящу,
в восторг всю душу приводящу.
Но что! — От солнца ль в ней толь яркое блистанье!
Нет! — Пирамида — дел благих воспоминанье.

Fig. 34. Gavriil Derzhavin.
Poem in the shape of a pyramid.

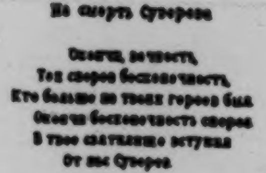
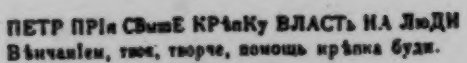


Fig. 35. Gavriil Derzhavin.
Poem in the shape of a coffin.



ПЕТР ПРІя СВышЕ КРѣпКу ВЛАСТь НА ЛюДИ
Вѣнчанiем, твоѧ, творче, помощь крѣпка буди.

Fig. 36. Antiokh Kantemir.
Chronogram in honour of Peter II's coronation.

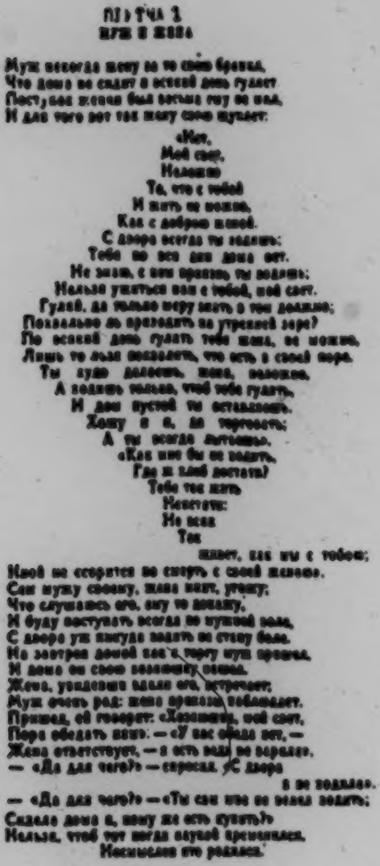
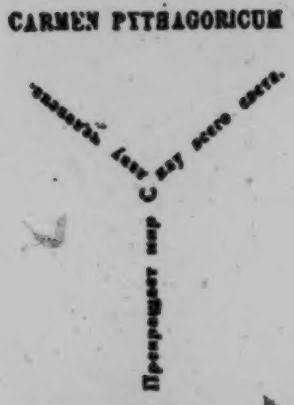


Fig. 37. Aleksei Rzhevskii.
Figure poem.



CARMEN PYTHAGORICUM
Превращает мир

Fig. 38. Anonymous author.
Pythagorium poem.

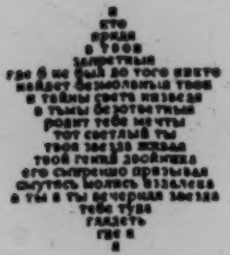


Fig. 39. Ivan Rukavishnikov.
The poem in the shape of a star.

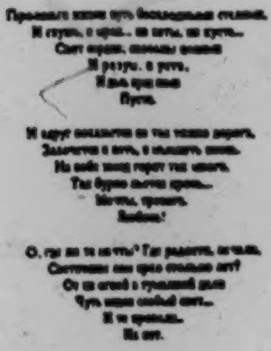
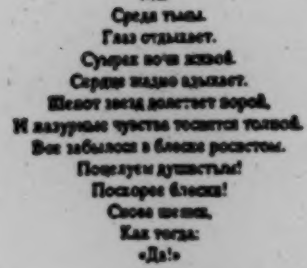


Fig. 40. A. Apukhtin.
Figure poem.



Мы—
Среди тьмы.
Глаз отдыхает.
Сумрак ночи живой.
Сердце жадно вдыхает.
Шепот звезд долетает порой.
И лазурные чувства теснятся толпой.
Все забылося в блеске росистом.
Поцелуем душистым!
Поскорее блесни!
Снова шепни,
Как тогда:
«Да!»

Fig. 41. Erl. Martov.
"Rhombus."[2]

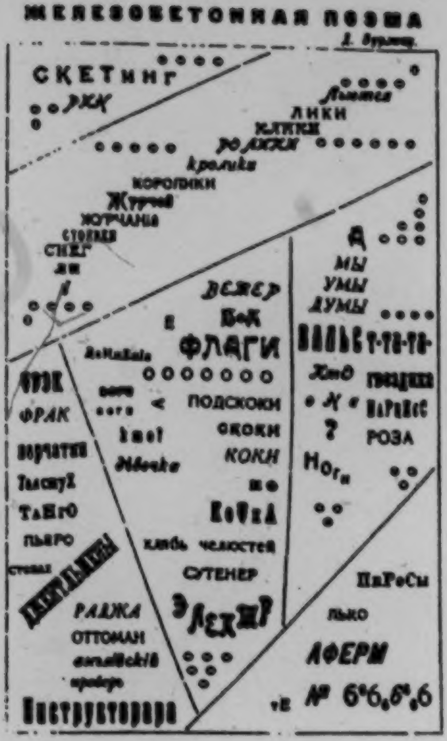

ЖЕЛЕЗОБЕТОННАЯ ПОЭМА
СКЕТИНГ
ЛИКИ
кролики
КОРОЛИКИ
Журчей
ЖУРЧАНЬЯ
СНЕГ
ВЕЧЕР
ФЛАГИ
ПОДСКОКИ
СКОКИ
КОКИ
ФРАК
ТАНГО
ПЬЕРО
ХЛЕБЬ ЧЕЛЮСТЕЙ
СУТЕНЕР
РАДЖА
ОТТОМАН
МЫ
УМЫ
ДУМЫ
РОЗА
Ноги
ПаРоСы
АФЕРИ
№ 6°6,6°,6

Fig. 42. Vasilii Kamenskii. "Zhelezobetonnaia poema" (Ferroconcrete poem").

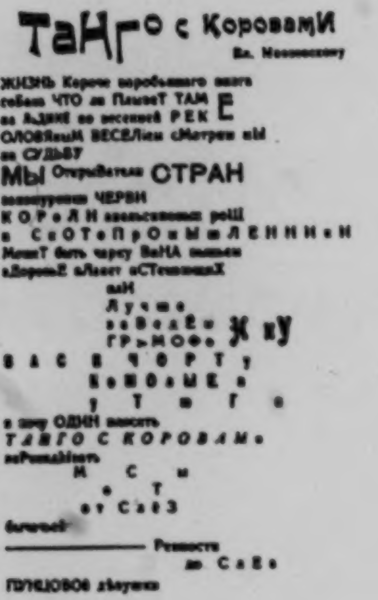

ТаНГо с КоровамИ
ЖИЗНЬ
ЧТО
ТАМ
Е
МЫ
СТРАН
ЧЕРВИ
ТАНГО С КОРОВАМИ

Fig. 43. Vasilii Kamenskii. "Tango s korovami" ("Tango with Cows").

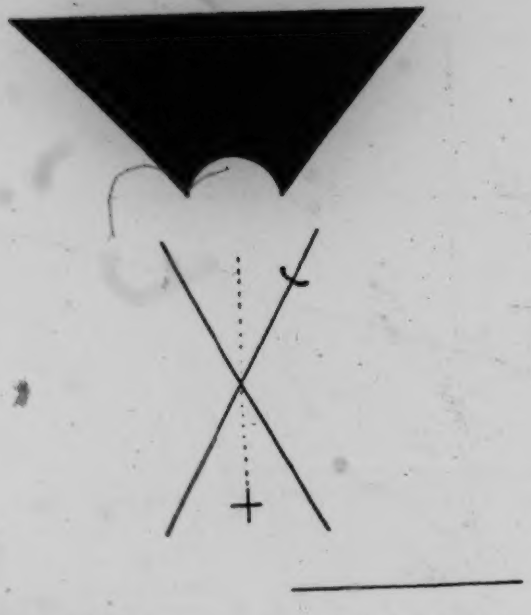


Fig. 44. Aleksei Chicherin. Nondiscursive poem.

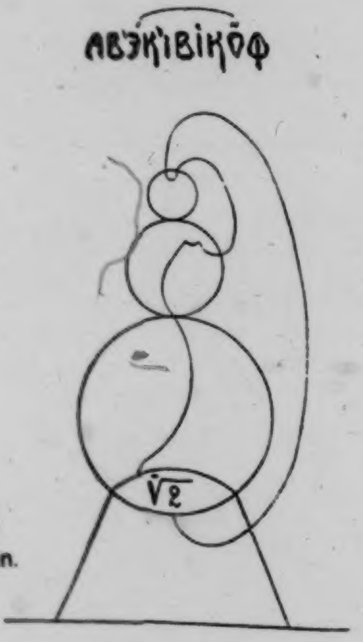

АВЭК'ІВІКŌФ
√2

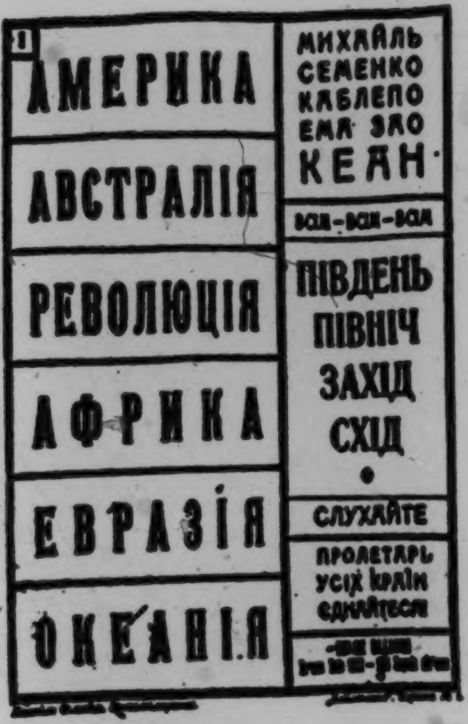
Fig. 45. Aleksei Chicherin. "Avekivikof."

О
АО
АОО
АООО
ПАВЛО
ПОПАСИ
КОРООВУ

Fig. 46. Myhailo Semenko.
"Silskyi peizazh"
("Village Landscape").

| Я | I |
|---|---|
| Излучистая | Meandering |
| Лучистая | Radiant |
| Чистая | Clean/pure |
| Истая | True/[illegible] |
| Стая | Flight/flock |
| Тая | Thawing/concealing |
| Ая | (f. ending) |
| Я | I |

Fig. 47. Vasilii Kamenskii.
Disappearing poem.



1

АМЕРИКА
АВСТРАЛІЯ
РЕВОЛЮЦІЯ
АФРИКА
ЕВРАЗІЯ
ОКЕАНІ.Я

МИХАЙЛЬ
СЕМЕНКО
КАБЛЕПО
ЕМА ЗАО
КЕАН

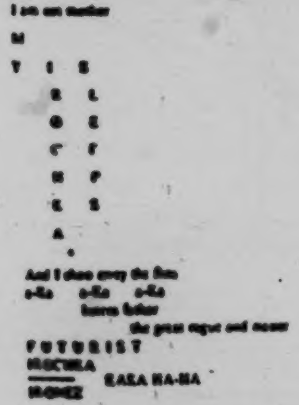
ВСІМ-ВСІМ-ВСІМ

ПІВДЕНЬ
ПІВНІЧ
ЗАХІД
СХІД

СЛУХАЙТЕ

ПРОЛЕТАРІ
УСІХ КРАЇН
ЄДНАЙТЕСЯ

Fig. 48. Myhailo Semenko.
"Kablopoema za okean"
("Cablepoem Across the Ocean").



I am not mother

FUTURIST

KASA HA-HA

Fig. 49. Myhailo Semenko.
"I am not mother."

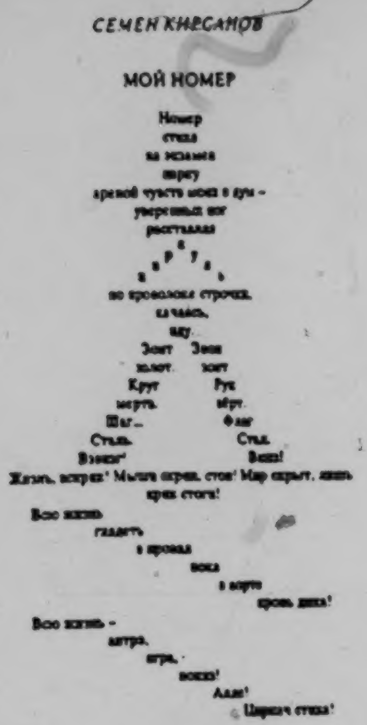

СЕМЕН КИРСАНОВ
МОЙ НОМЕР

Fig. 50. Semen Kirsanov
"Moi nomer" ("My Number").

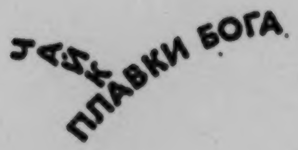
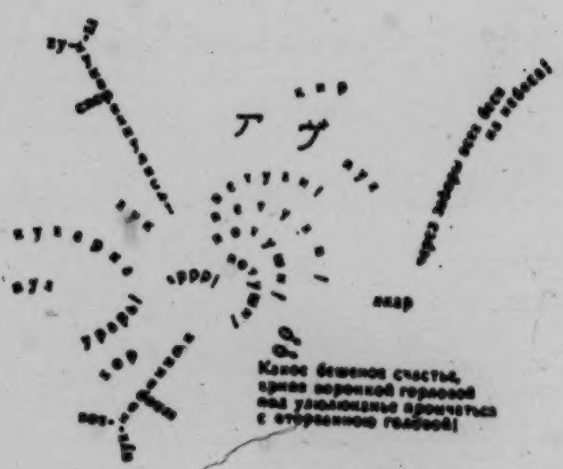

ЧАЙКА
ПЛАВКИ БОГА

Fig. 51. Andrei Voznesenskii.
"Chaika – plavki Boga"
("Seagull – God's Swimming Trunks").



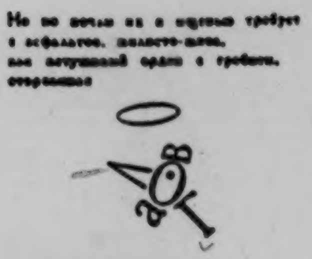


Fig. 52. Andrei Voznesenskii.
"Boi petukhov" ("Cocks' Fight").

**Page 268 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. The information removed was Figure 53: Andrei Voznesenskii "Sergei Esenin." Source: Andrei Voznesenskii. *Videomy*. Moscow: RIK Kultura, 1992, 8.**

Page 269 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. The information removed was Figure 54: Andrei Voznesenskii "Maiakovskii." Source: Andrei Voznesenskii. *Videomy*. Moscow: RIK Kultura, 1992, 16.

Page 270 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. The information removed was Figure 55: Andrei Voznesenskii "Nikolai Gumilev." Source: Andrei Voznesenskii. *Videomy*. Moscow: RIK Kultura, 1992, 55.

Page 271 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. The information removed was Figure 56: Andrei Voznesenskii "Igor Severianin." Source: Andrei Voznesenskii. *Videomy*. Moscow: RIK Kultura, 1992, 23.

Page 272 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. The information removed was Figure 57: Andrei Voznesenskii "Kak naiti SKV v Moskve?" Source: Andrei Voznesenskii. *Videomy*. Moscow: RIK Kultura, 1992, 123.

Page 273 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. The information removed was Figure 58: Andrei Voznesenskii "Tma-Mat" Source: Andrei Voznesenskii. *Videomy.* Moscow: RIK Kultura, 1992, 338

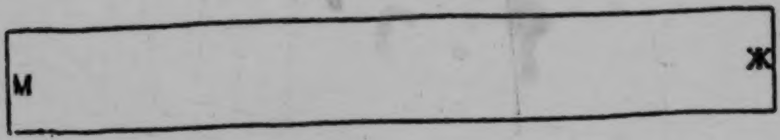


Fig. 59. Igor. Kholin. Visual text.

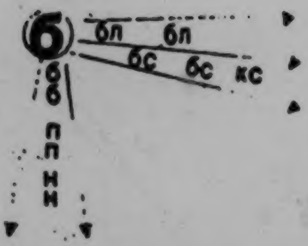

б
бл бл
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Fig. 60. Ry Nikonova.
"Vokrug solntsa B" ("Around the Sun B").

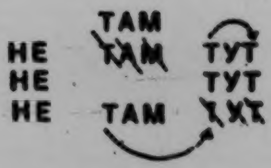
ТАМ
НЕ ТАМ ТУТ
НЕ ТУТ
НЕ ТАМ ТУТ

Fig. 61. Ry Nikonova. "Ne tam – ne tut" ("Neither there, not here").

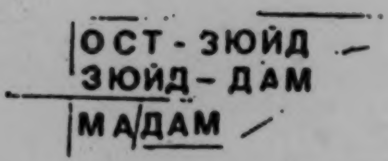
ОСТ - ЗЮЙД
ЗЮЙД - ДАМ
МА/ДАМ

Fig. 62. Ry Nikonova. "Ost-zuiid" ("East-West").

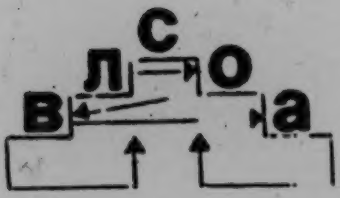

Fig. 63. Ry Nikonova. "Slova" ("Words").

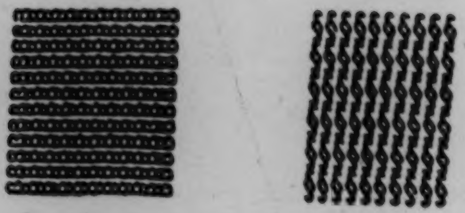

Fig. 64. Anna Alchuk "Prosteishie" ("The Simplest").

**ВОПРОС**

?

Fig. 65. Genrikh Sapgir. "Vopros" ("Question").

**ОТВЕТ**

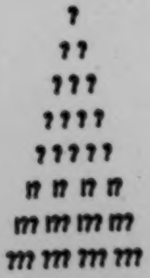

Fig. 66. Genrikh Sapgir. "Otvet" ("Answer")

**ПОДТЕКСТ**

...!
/ ..............................? /

...?
/ ..............................! /
....
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..............?! /

Fig. 67. Genrikh Sapgir. "Podtekst" ("Subtext").

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Fig. 68. Genrikh Sapgir. "Marsh" ("March").

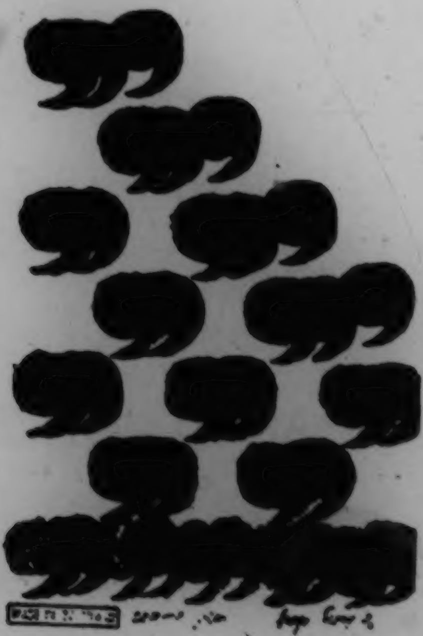


Fig. 69. Sergei Sigei. "Comma poem."

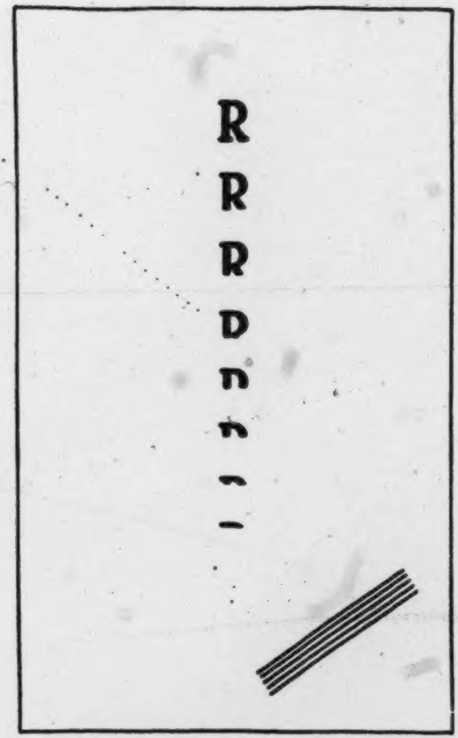


Fig. 70. Dmitrii Bulatov. Composition.

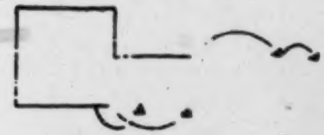


Fig. 71. Ry Nikonova
Vacuum poem.

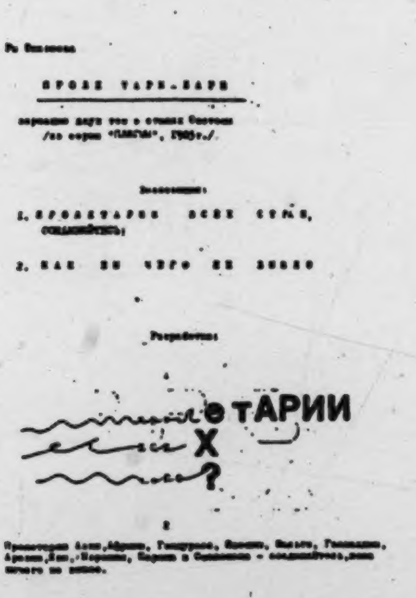
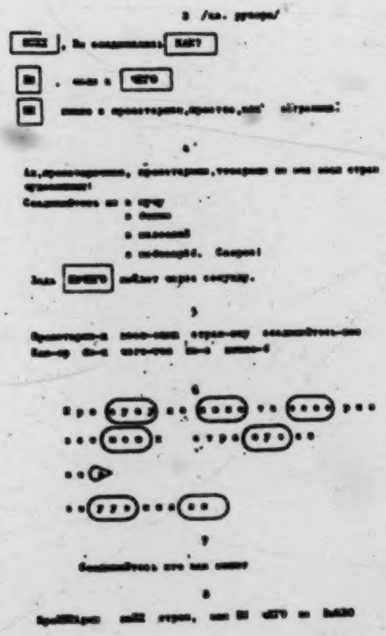


Fig. 72. Ry Nikonova. "Prole tari-bari."



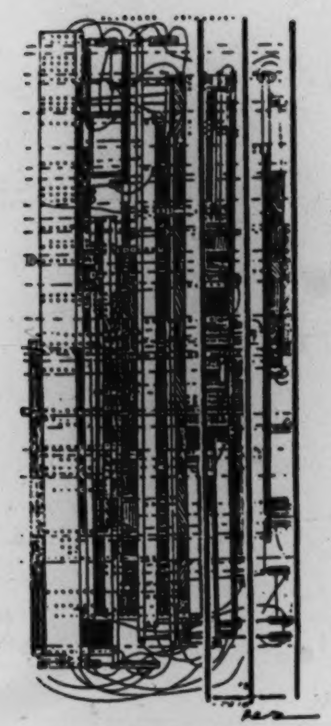


Fig. 73. Ry Nikonova.
"Liubovnik pogremushki"
("Lover of a Baby-rattle).

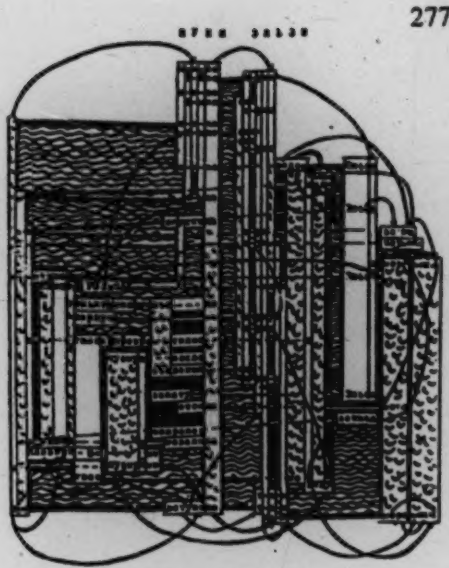


Fig. 74. Ry Nikonova.
"Shchuki Elzy" ("Elza's Pikes").

Fig. 77. Ry Nikonova,
and Ilze Garnier. "A-E-I."

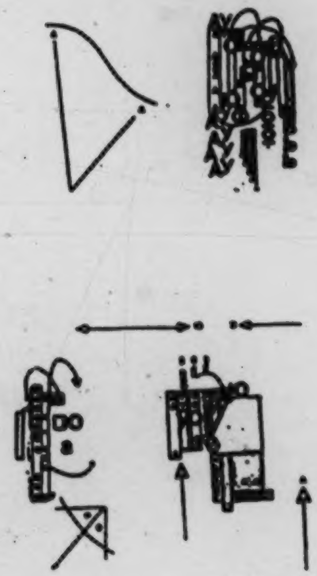
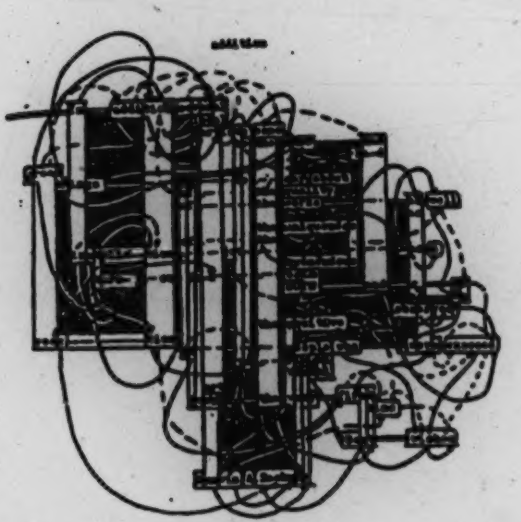
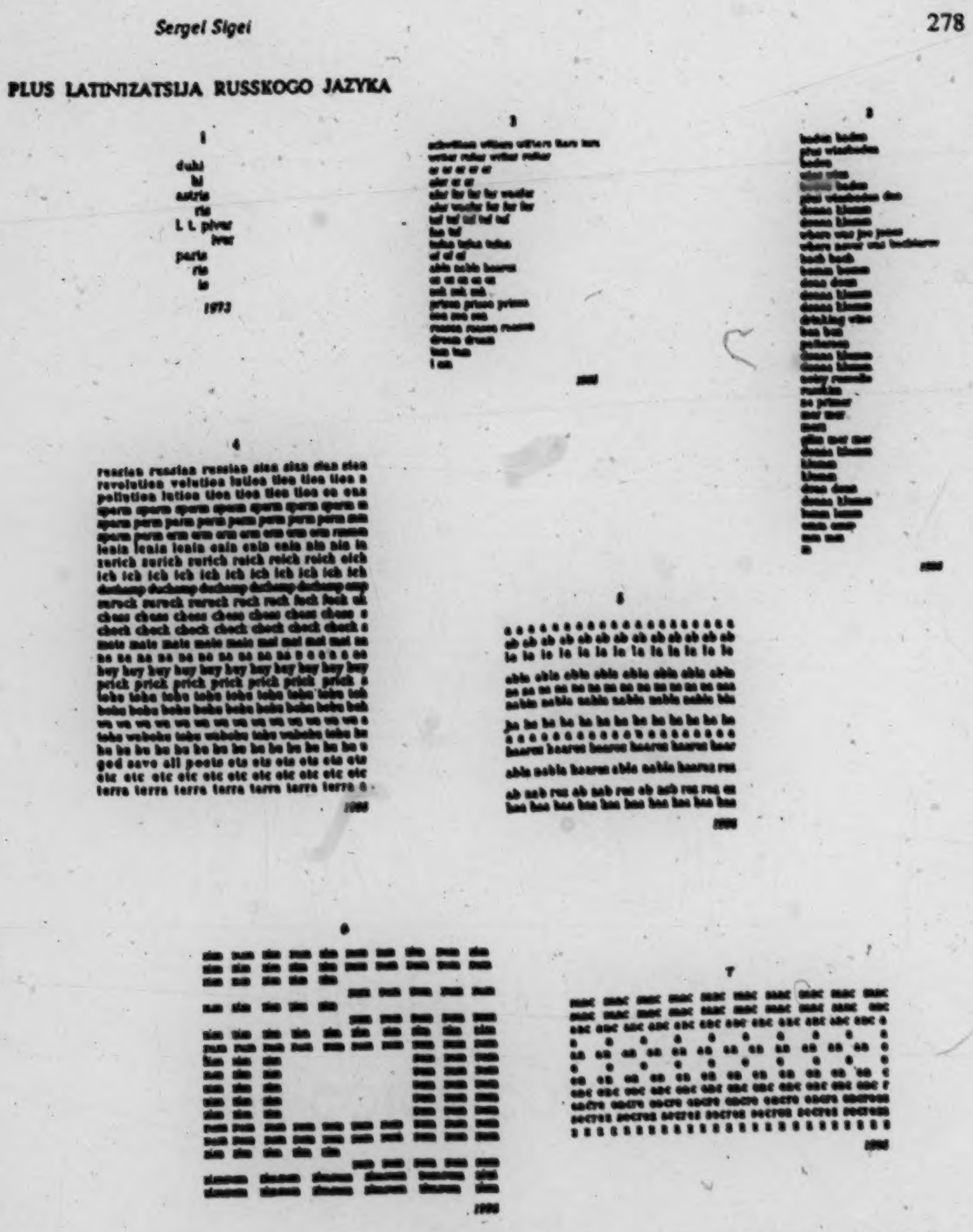


Fig. 75. Ry Nikonova.
"Architectural treatment"
of Marvin Sackner's letter.





*Sergei Sigei* 278

PLUS LATINIZATSIJA RUSSKOGO JAZYKA

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*1973*

Fig. 76. Sergei Sigei. "Plus latinizatsija russkogo iazyka" ("Plus Latinization of Russian").

Стихотворение на языках: эльпийни, цклан, нахатль (индейцы племён ацтеки-майя)

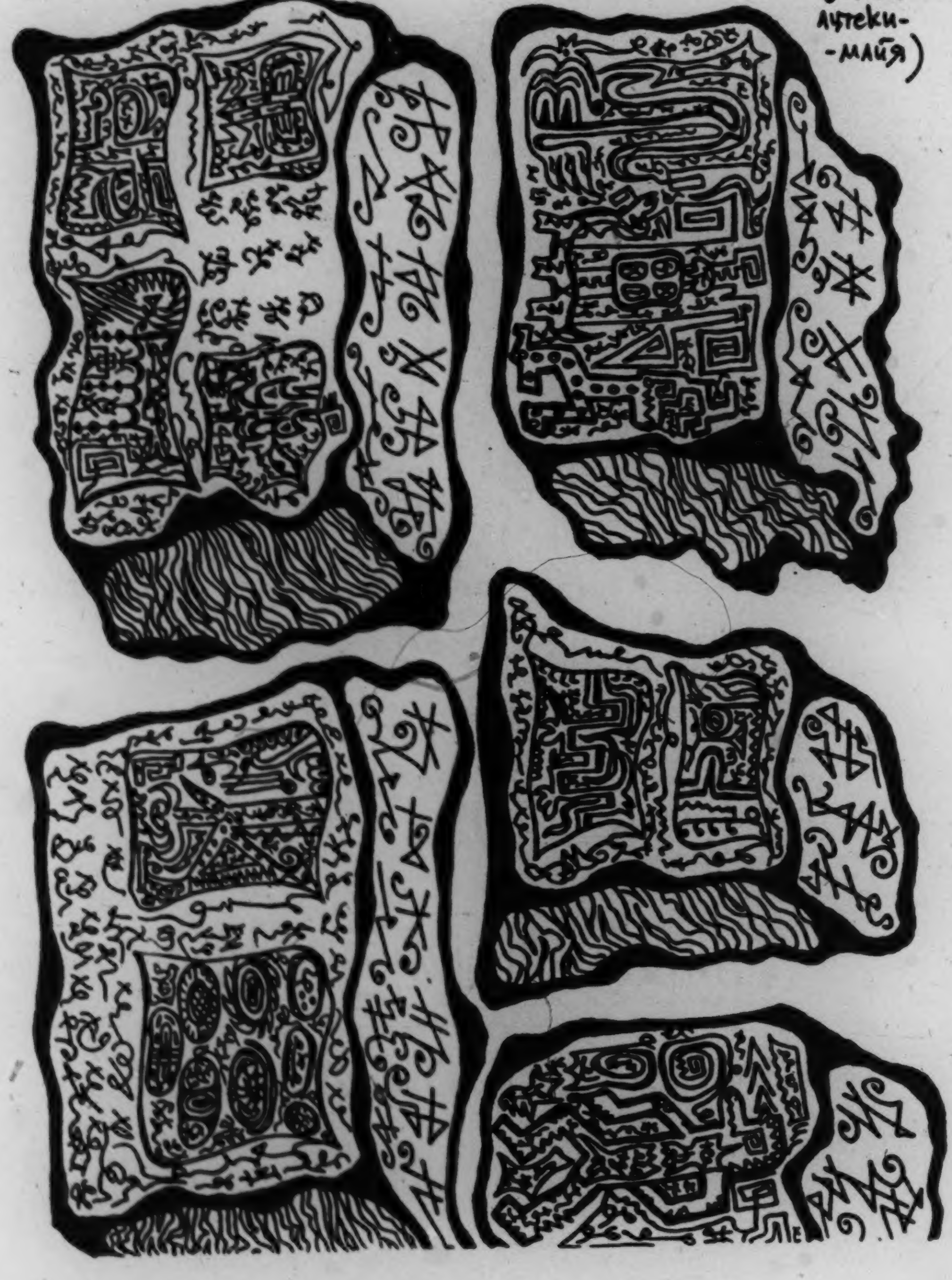


Fig. 78. Willy Melnikov. Pictographic poem.

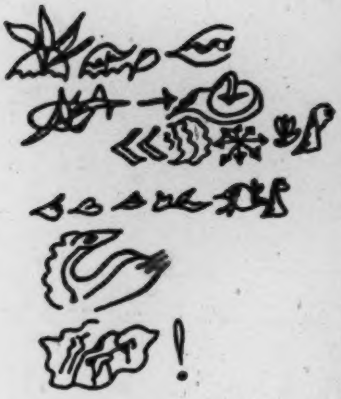


Fig. 79. Sergei Sigei.
Picto-poem.

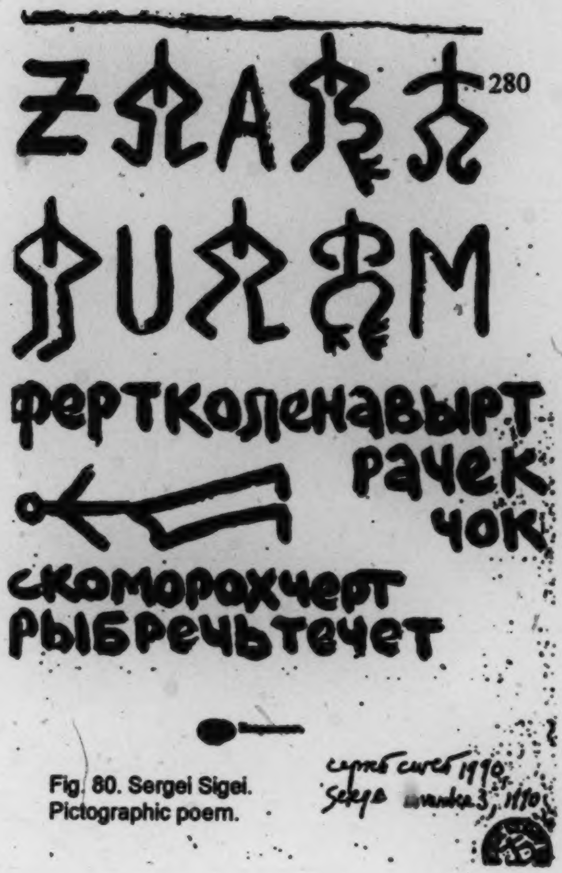
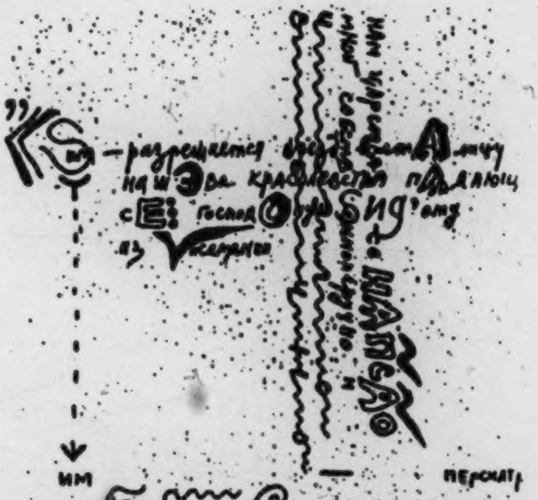

ферткоЛенавырт
рачек
чок
скоморохчерт
рыбречьтечет
1990

Fig. 80. Sergei Sigei.
Pictographic poem.

Fig. 81. Sergei Sigei.
Pictographic poem.



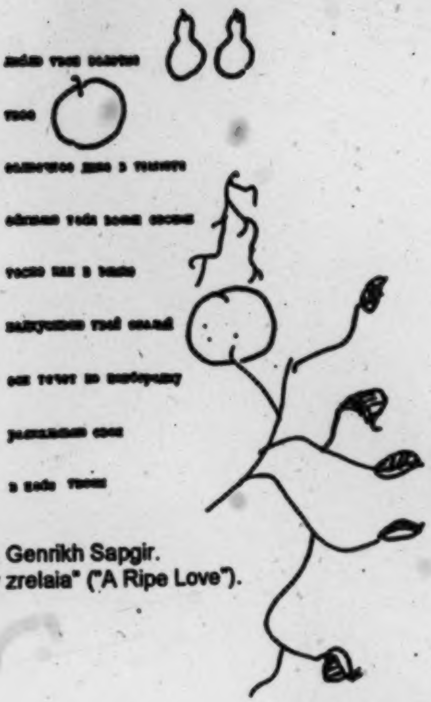


Fig. 82. Genrikh Sapgir.
"Liubov zrelaia" ("A Ripe Love").

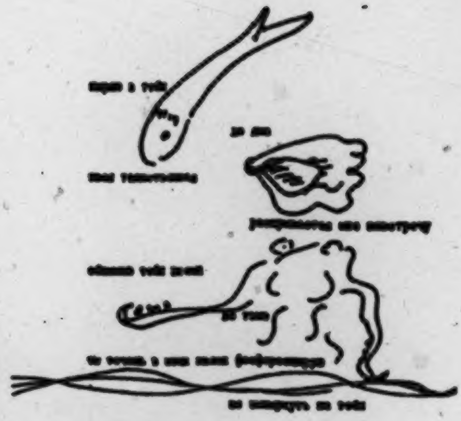
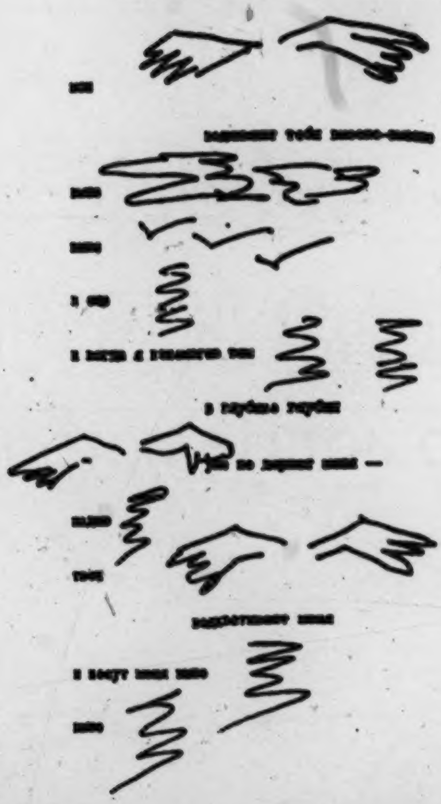


Fig. 83. Genrikh Sapgir.
"Liubov glubokaia" ("A Deep Love").

Fig. 84. Genrikh Sapgir.
"Liubov-polet" ("Love Is a Flight").



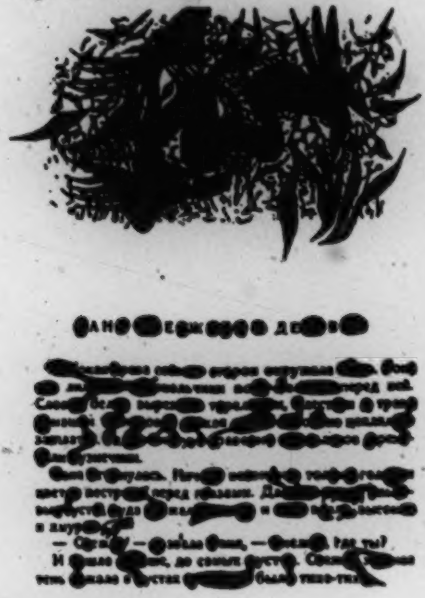


Fig. 85. Sergei Sigei.
Page from *Vor okov* (*A Thief of Fetters*).

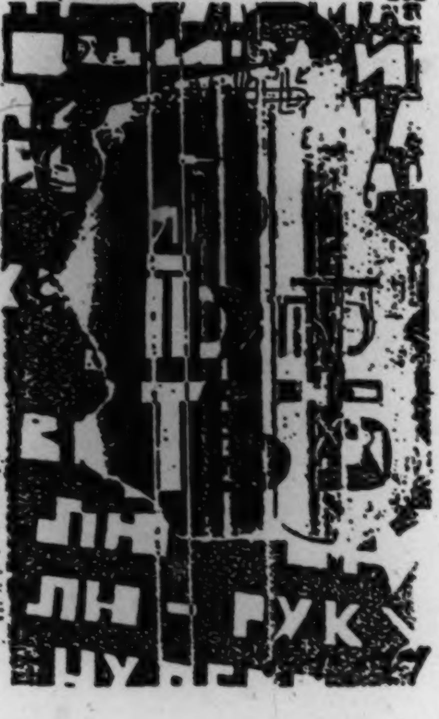


Fig. 86. Sergei Sigei.
Composition.

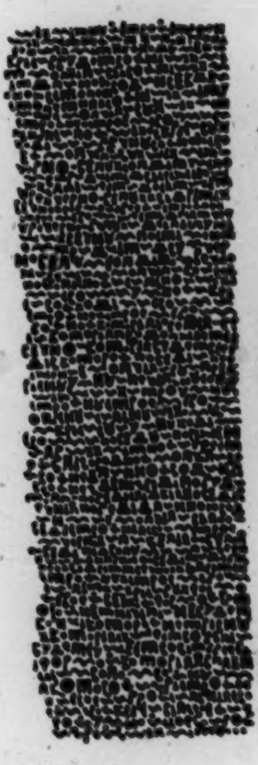


Fig. 87. Andrei Repeshko.
"Shakhmatnyi stroi stroen"
("The System of Chess Is Orderly").

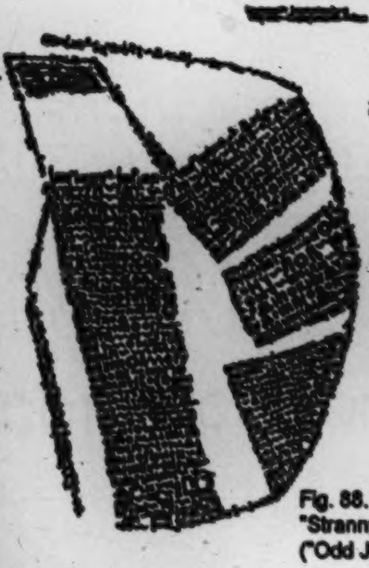


Fig. 88. Andrei Repeshko.
"Strannye stranstvila"
("Odd Journeys").

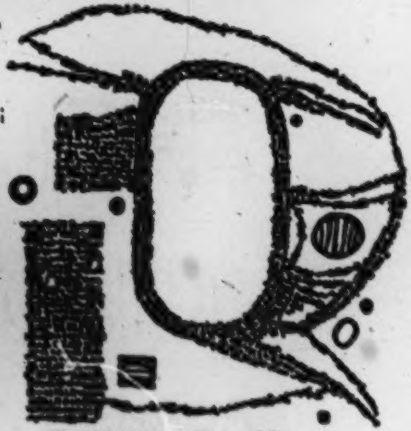


Fig. 89. Andrei Repeshko.
Composition in the shape of a fish.

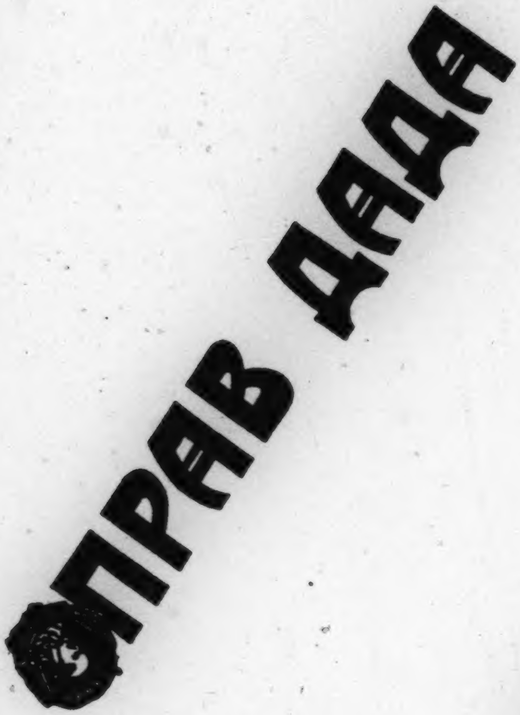


Fig. 90. Vagrich Bakhchanian.
"Prav Dada."

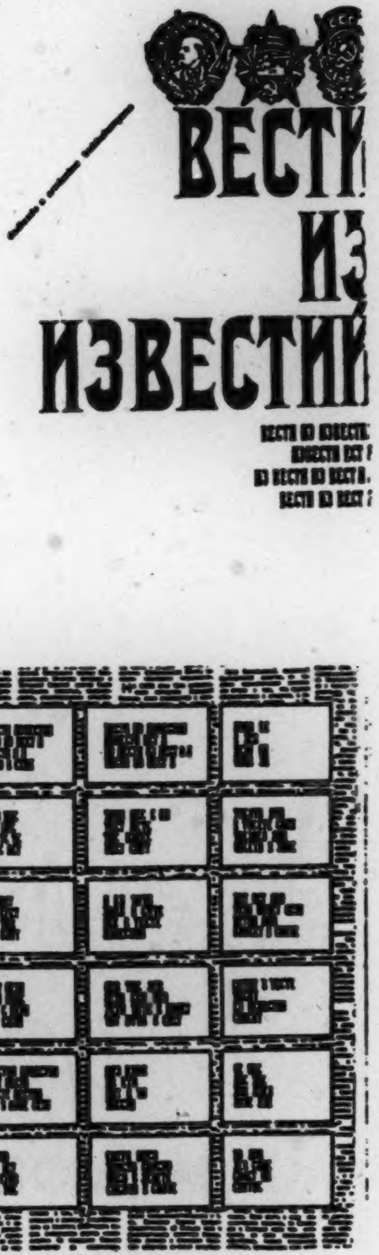

ВЕСТ
ИЗ
ИЗВЕСТИЙ

Fig. 91. Konstantin Kuzminsky.
"Vesti iz *Izvestii*" ("News from *Izvestiia*").

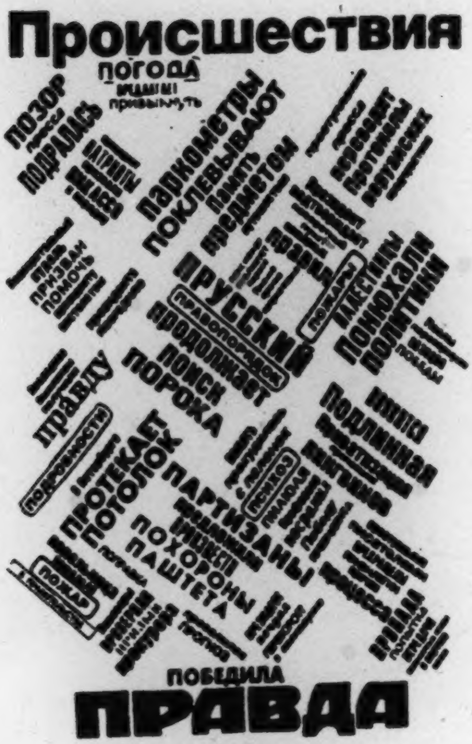

Происшествия
ПОГОДА
ПОЗОР
ПОДРАЛИСЬ
ПАРКОМЕТРЫ
ПОКЛЕВЫВАЮТ
ПРУССКИЙ
ПРАВОПОРЯДОК
ПОНЮХАЛИ
ПОЛИТИКИ
ПРОДОЛЖАЕТ
ПОИСКИ
ПОРОКА
ПРАВДУ
ПОДРОБНОСТИ
ПРОТЕКАЕТ
ПОТОЛОК
ПАРТИЗАНЫ
ПОХОРОНЫ
ПАШТЕТА
Подлинная
ПОЖАР
ПОБЕДИЛА
ПРАВДА

Fig. 92. Olga Dmitrieva.
*P*-letter page from the project
*Literaturnaia ucheba.*

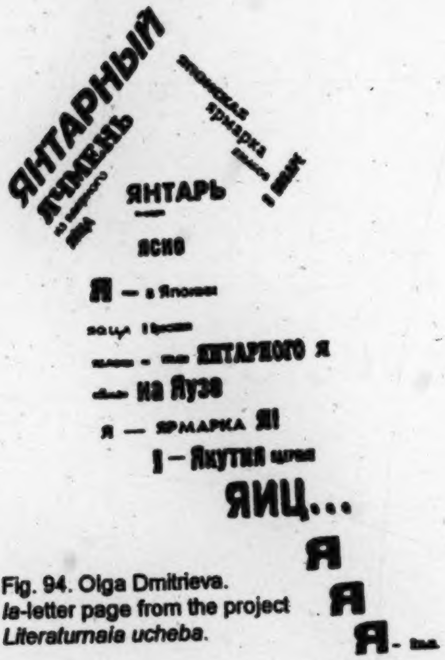

ЯНТАРНЫЙ
ЯЧМЕНЬ
ЯРМАРКА
ЯНТАРЬ
ЯСНО
Я — в Японии
ЯНТАРНОГО Я
на Яузе
Я — ЯРМАРКА Я
Я — Якутия
ЯИЦ...
Я
Я
Я-

Fig. 94. Olga Dmitrieva.
*Ia*-letter page from the project
*Literaturnaia ucheba.*

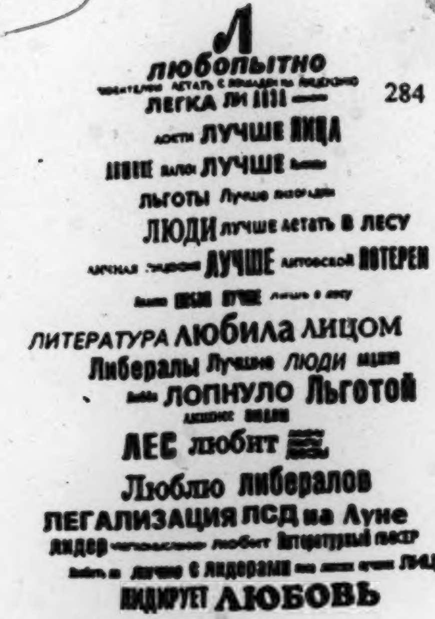

Л
любопытно
ЛЕГКА ЛИ
ЛУЧШЕ ЛИЦА
ЛУЧШЕ
ЛЬГОТЫ
ЛЮДИ лучше летать В ЛЕСУ
ЛУЧШЕ ПОТЕРЕН
ЛИТЕРАТУРА любила лицом
Либералы Лучше ЛЮДИ
ЛОПНУЛО Льготой
ЛЕС любит
Люблю либералов
ЛЕГАЛИЗАЦИЯ ЛСД на Луне
лидер любит литературный
лучше с лидерами
ЛИДИРУЕТ ЛЮБОВЬ

Fig. 93. Olga Dmitrieva.
*L*-letter page from the project
*Literaturnaia ucheba.*

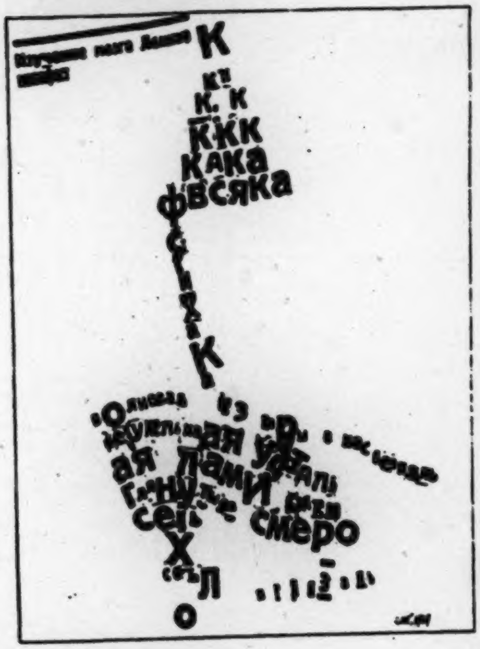

К
К. К
ККК
Кака
фвсяка
К
смеро
Х
Л
О

Fig. 95. Sergei Sigei.
"Izuchenie mozga Lenina"
("Study of Lenin's Brain").

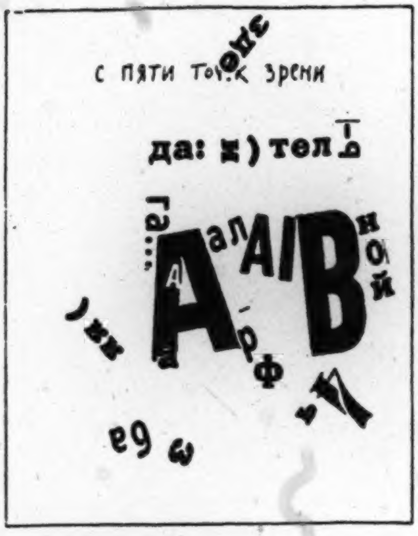

с пяти точек зрени
да: ж ) тел
А
В

Fig. 96. Sergei Sigei.
"S piati tochek zrenii[a]"
("From Five Points of Vie[w]").

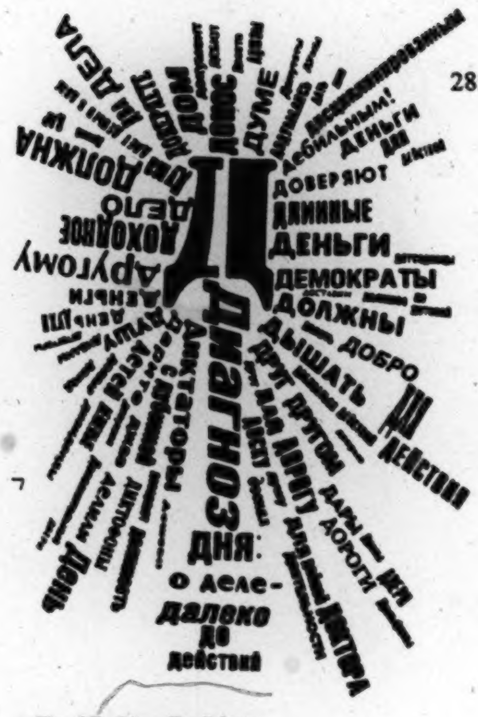

Д
ДИАГНОЗ
ДНЯ:
о деле-
далеко
до
действий
ДЕНЬГИ
ДЕМОКРАТЫ
ДОЛЖНЫ
ДОБРО
ДЛИННЫЕ
ДОВЕРЯЮТ
ДУМЕ
ДРУГОМУ
ДОЛЖНА
ДЕЙСТВИЯ

Fig. 97. Olga Dmitrieva.
*D*-letter page from the project
*Literaturnaia ucheba*.

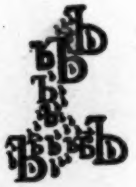


Fig. 98. Olga Dmitrieva. Hard sign page
from the project *Literaturnaia ucheba*.

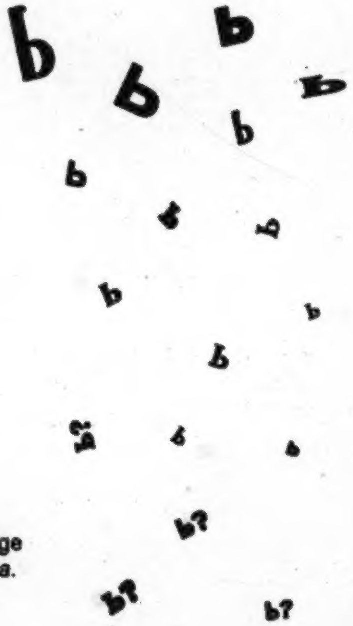


Fig. 99. Olga Dmitrieva. Soft sign page
from the project *Literaturnaia ucheba*.

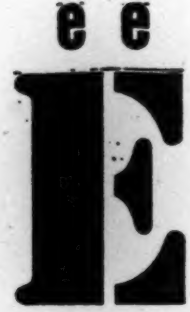
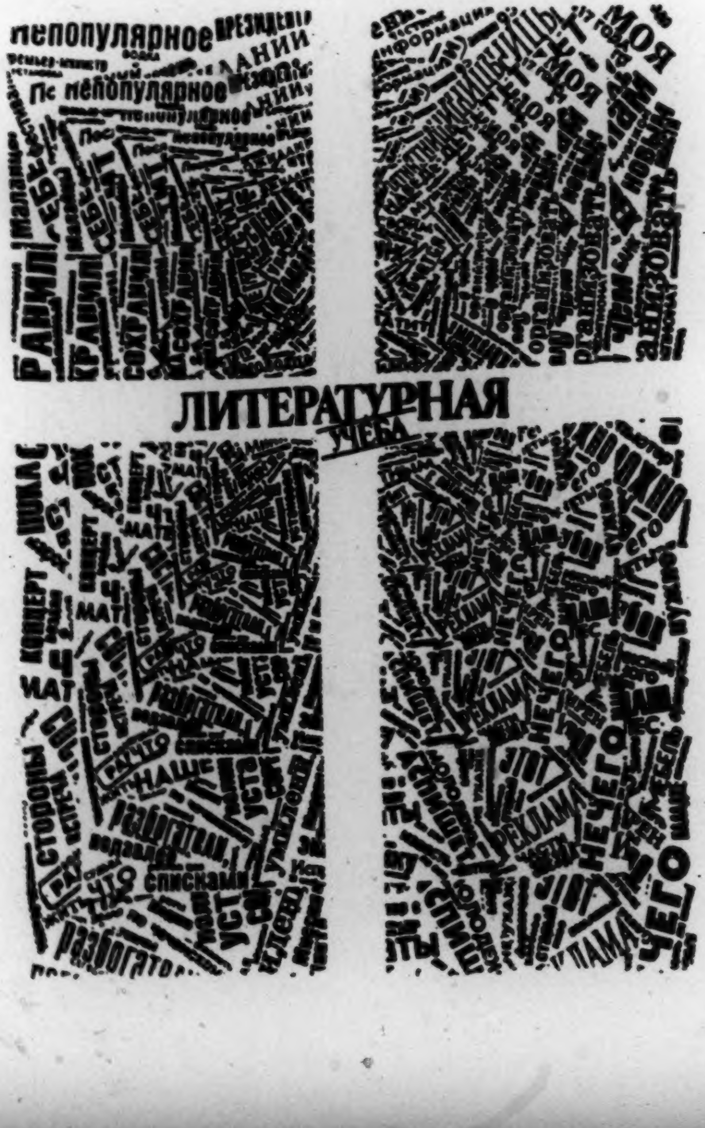


Fig. 100. Olga Dmitrieva.
*E*-letter page from the project
*Literaturnaia ucheba*.

Fig. 101. Olga Dmitrieva. Title page of the project *Literaturnaia ucheba*.


непопулярное
непопулярное
ЛИТЕРАТУРНАЯ
УЧЕБА
информации
МОЯ
РЕКЛАМА
НЕЧЕГО
ЧЕГО
списками
разбогател
КОНЦЕРТ
стороны

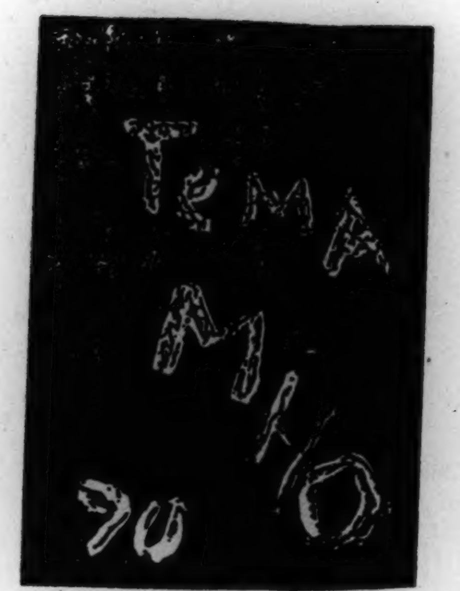


Fig. 102. Boris Konstrictor. "Tema Mno."

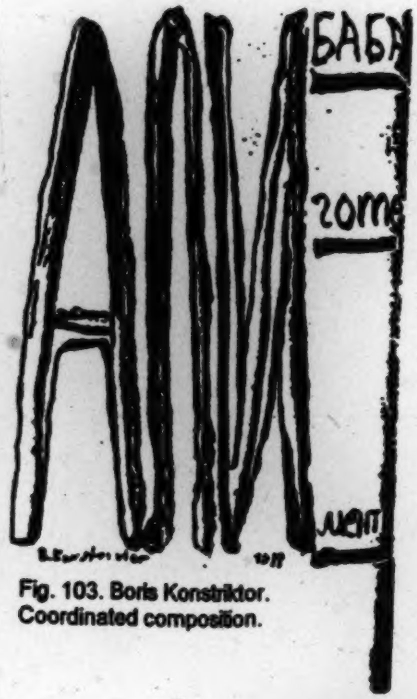

БАБА
гоме
мент

Fig. 103. Boris Konstriktor. Coordinated composition.

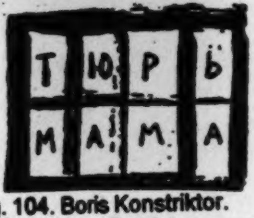


Fig. 104. Boris Konstriktor. "Tiurma-mama" ("Prison- mama").

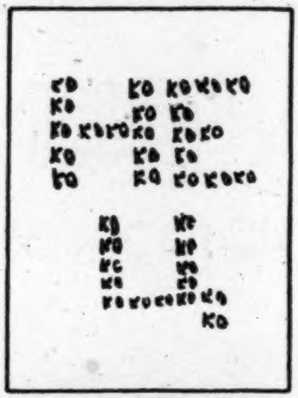


Fig. 105. Boris Konstriktor. "Konets" ("The End").

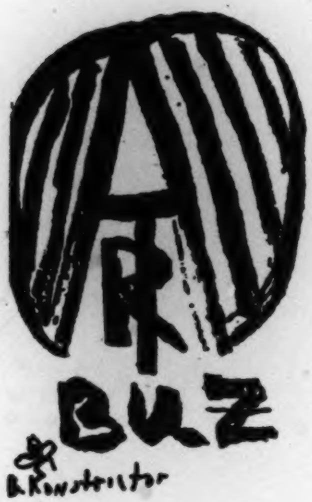

ART
BUZ
B.Konstriktor

Fig. 106. Boris Konstriktor. "Artbuz."

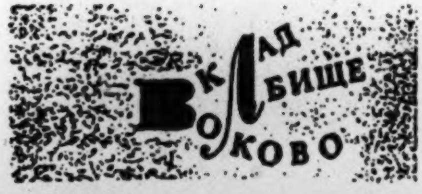

ВКЛАДБИЩЕ
ВОЛКОВО

Fig. 107. Aleksandr Gornon. Fragment.

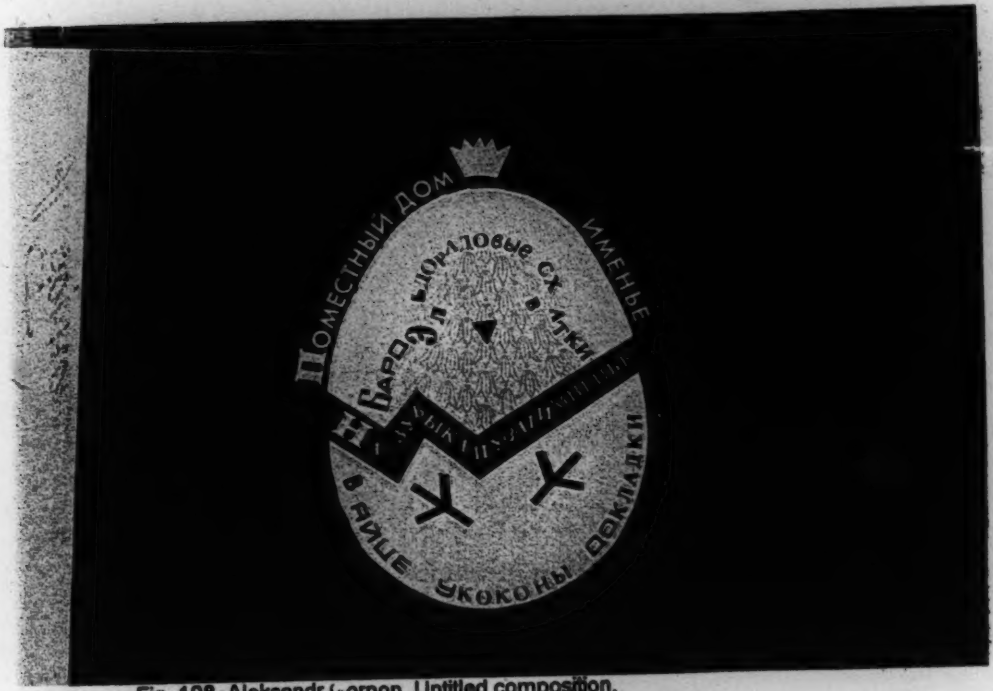

ПОМЕСТНЫЙ ДОМ
ИМЕНЬЕ
В ЯЙЦЕ УКОКОНЫ ПОКЛАДКИ

Fig. 108. Aleksandr Gornon. Untitled composition.

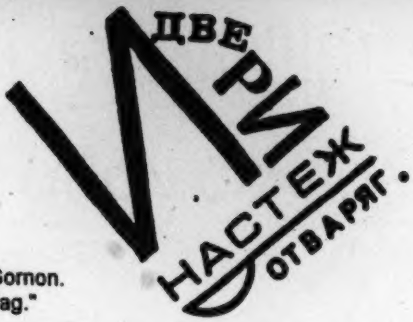

И ДВЕРИ
НАСТЕЖ
ОТВАРЯГ.

Fig. 109. Aleksandr Gornon.
"I dveri nastezh otvariag."

*(для исполнения в четыре руки)*

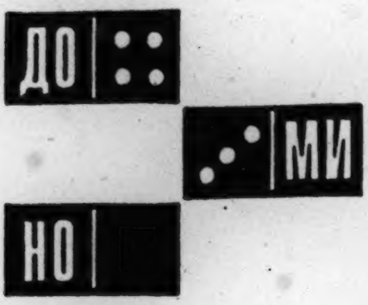


Fig. 110. Sergei Biriukov.
"Sonata do-mi-no."

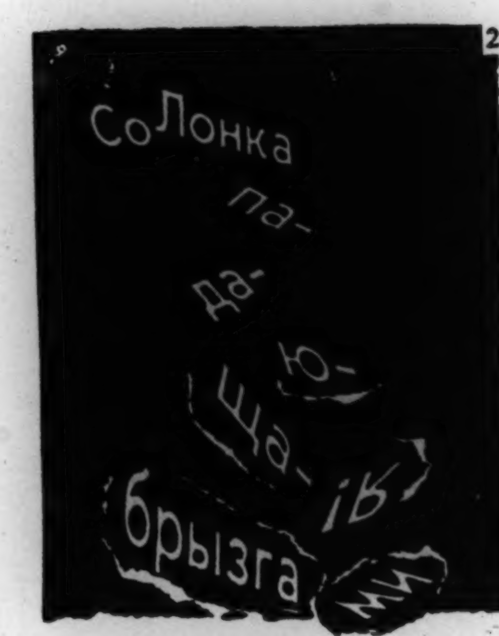

Солонка
па-
да-
ю-
ща-
ів
брызга
ми

Fig. 111. Sergei Biriukov.
"Solonka padaiushchaia bryzgami"
("Sprinkling Falling Salt-shaker").

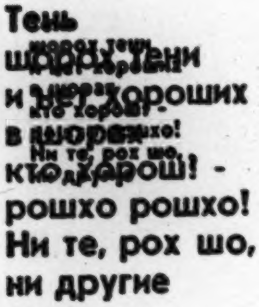

Тень
шорох тени
и нет хороших
в шорохе
кто хорош! -
рошхо рошхо!
Ни те, рох шо,
ни другие

Fig. 112. Sergei Biriukov.
"Ten shorokh teni"
("Shadow, Rustle of the Shadow").

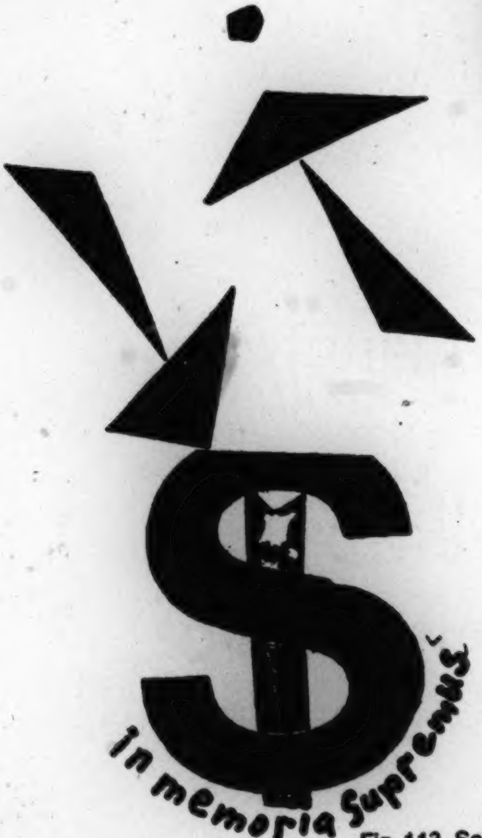
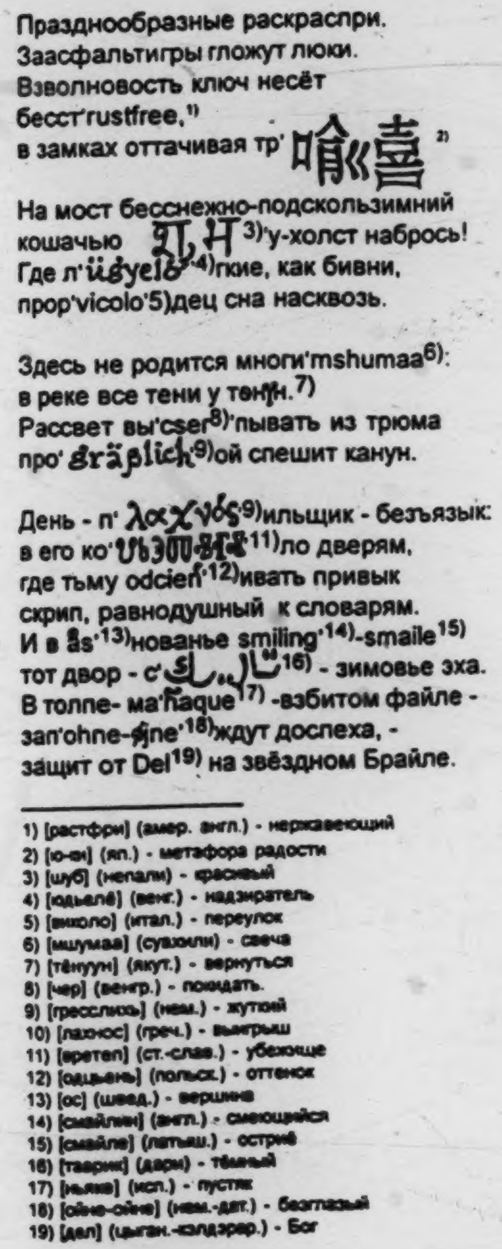

in memoria Supremus

Fig. 113. Sergei Biriukov.
"In Memoria Supremus."



Празднообразные раскраспри.
Заасфальтигры гложут люки.
Взволновость ключ несёт
бесст'rustfree,1)
в замках оттачивая тр' 喩喜 2)

На мост бесснежно-подскользимний
кошачью शुभ 3)'у-холст набрось!
Где л'ügyelő'4)гкие, как бивни,
пpop'vicolo'5)дец сна насквозь.

Здесь не родится многи'mshumaa6):
в реке все тени у төнүн.7)
Рассвет вы'cser8)'пывать из трюма
про' gräßlich'9)ой спешит канун.

День - п' λαχνός'9)ильщик - безъязык:
в его ко'ⰲⱃⰵⱅⰵⱂ'11)ло дверям,
где тьму odcień'12)ивать привык
скрип, равнодушный к словарям.
И в ås'13)нованье smiling'14)-smaile15)
тот двор - с'تاریک16) - зимовье эха.
В толпе- ма'ñaque17) -взбитом файле -
зап'ohne-øjne'18)ждут доспеха, -
защит от Del19) на звёздном Брайле.

---

1) [растфри] (амер. англ.) - нержавеющий
2) [ю-ки] (яп.) - метафора радости
3) [шуб] (непали) - красивый
4) [юдьелё] (венг.) - надзиратель
5) [виколо] (итал.) - переулок
6) [мшумаа] (суахили) - свеча
7) [тёнуун] (якут.) - вернуться
8) [чер] (венгр.) - покидать.
9) [грэсслихь] (нем.) - жуткий
10) [лахнос] (греч.) - выигрыш
11) [вретеп] (ст.-слав.) - убежище
12) [одцьень] (польск.) - оттенок
13) [ос] (швед.) - вершина
14) [смайлинг] (англ.) - смеющийся
15) [смайле] (латыш.) - остриё
16) [таарик] (дари) - тёмный
17) [ньяке] (исп.) - пустяк
18) [оне-ойне] (нем.-дат.) - безглазый
19) [дел] (цыган.-калдэрар.) - Бог

Fig. 114. Willi Melnikov.
Poem in "multolingua."

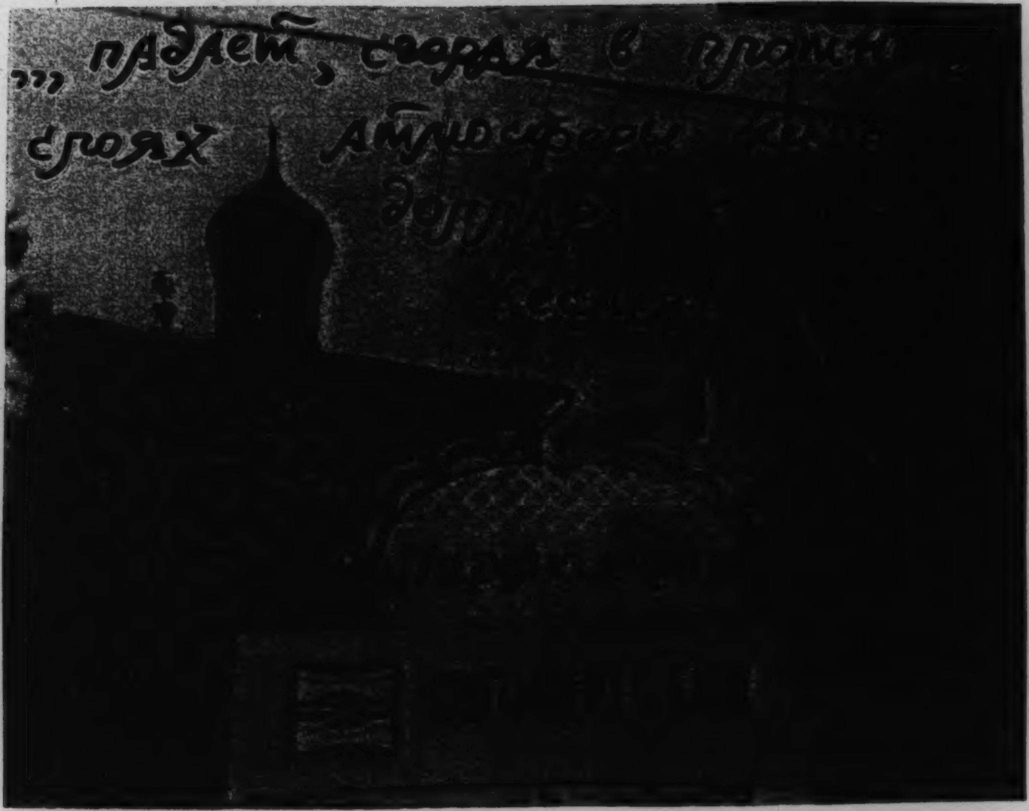

,,, падает, сгорая в
слоях Атмосферы

Fig. 115. Willi Melnikov. Photopoetic ideogram.

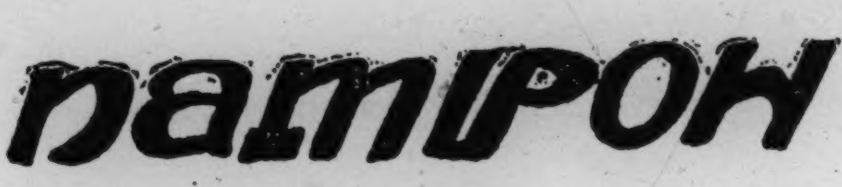


Fig. 116. Dmitrii Avaliani. Graphic anagrammatical composition.

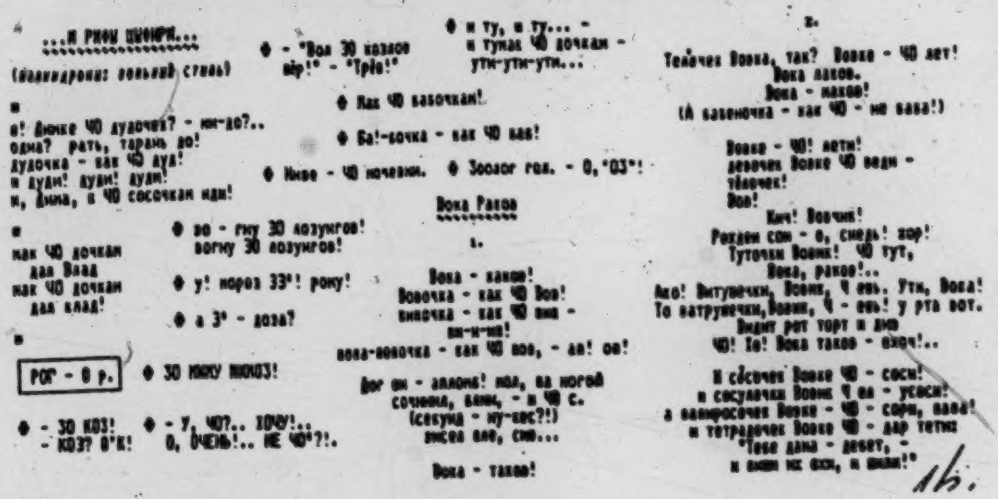


Fig. 117. Aleksandr Bubnov. Letter-digital palindrome.

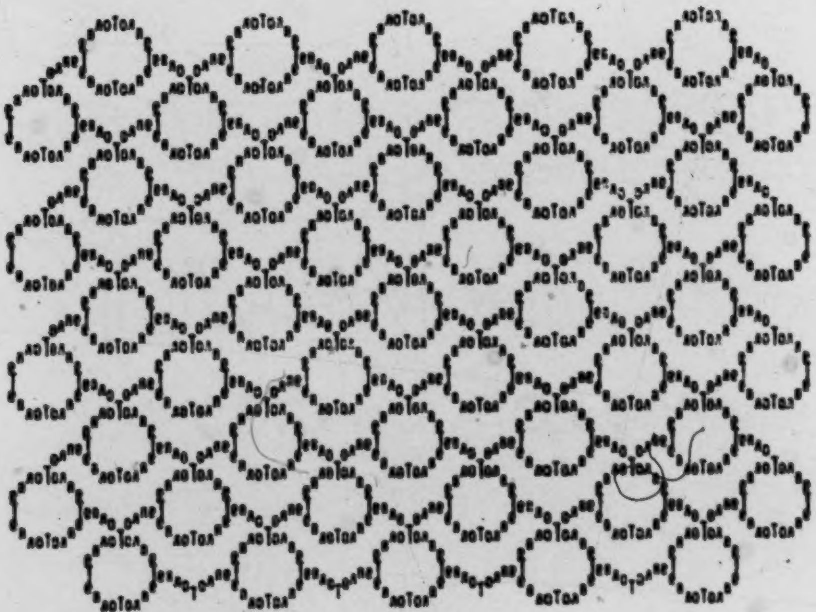


Fig. 118. Aleksandr Bubnov. Videocyclodrome.

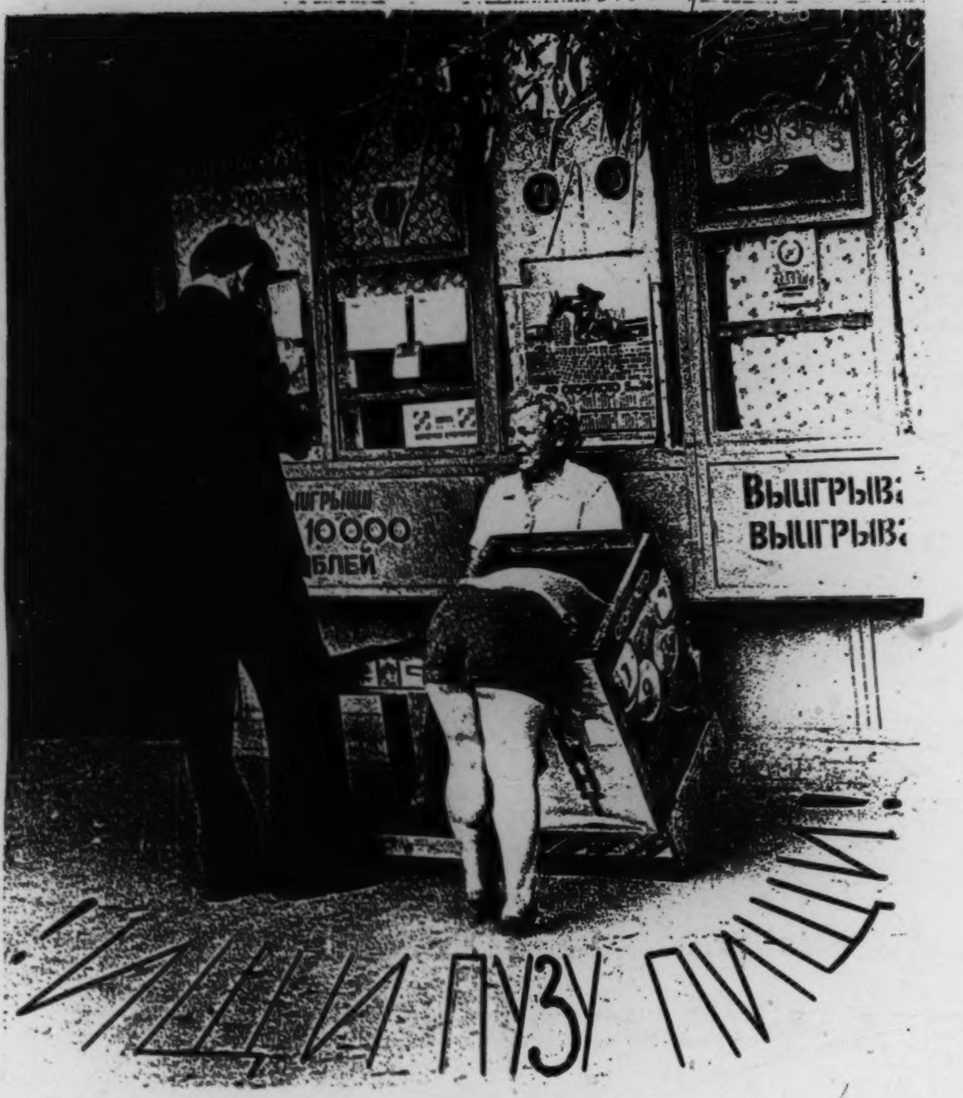

ИГРЫШИ
10000
БЛЕЙ
ВЫИГРЫВ
ВЫИГРЫВ
ИЩИ ПУЗУ ПИЩИ

Fig. 119. Aleksandr Bubnov. Videopalindrome .

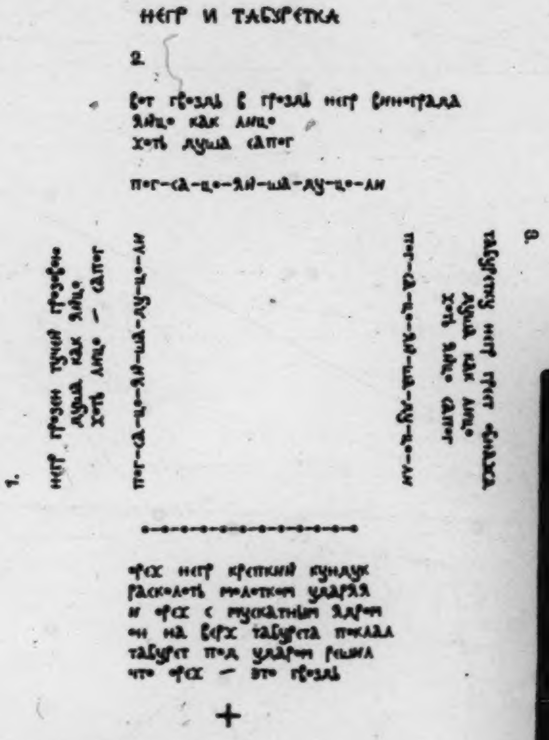


Fig. 120. Aleksandr Surikov.
"Negr i taburetka" ("Black Man and Stool").

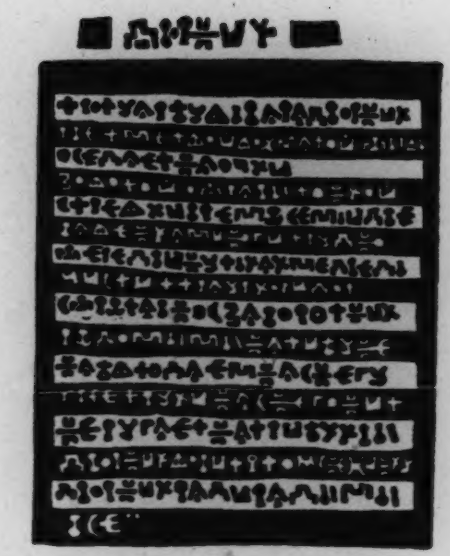


Fig. 122. Aleksandr Surikov. "Dvornik" ("Janitor").

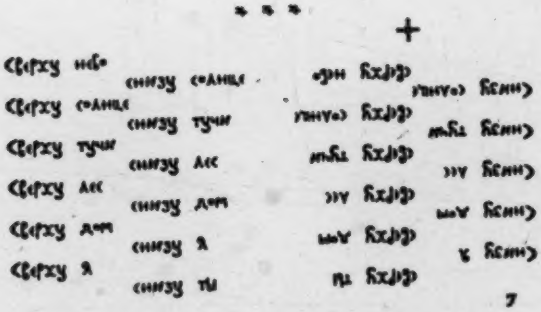


Fig. 121. Aleksandr Surikov. "Sverkhu nebo, snizy solntse" ("Above is the Sky, Beneath is the Sun").

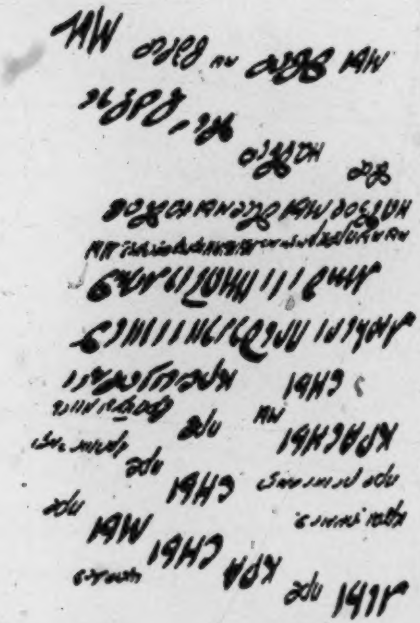


Fig. 123. Elisabeth Netzkowa.
Page from *Das Hohelied.*

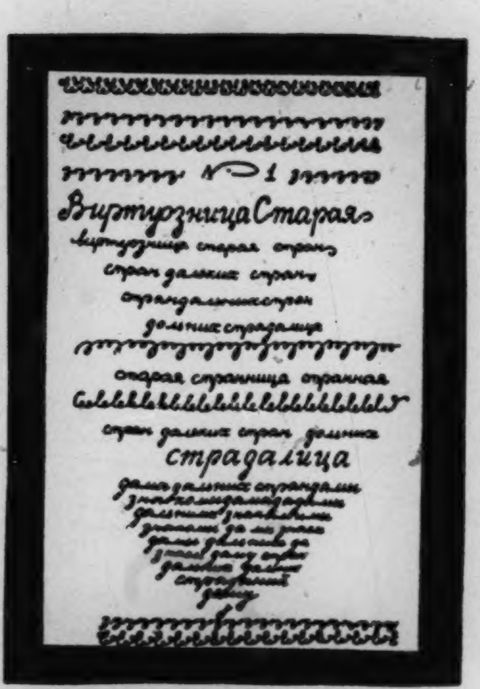

№ 1
Виртуозница Старая
страдалица

Fig. 124. Elisabeth Netzkowa.
Page from *U smerti v gostiakh* (*Visiting Death*).

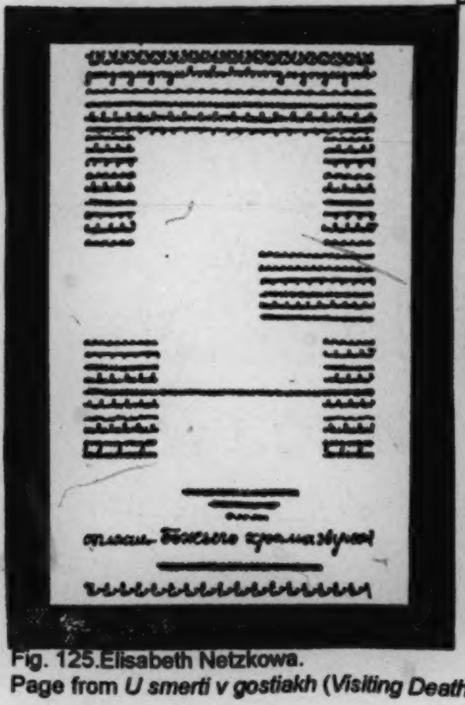


Fig. 125. Elisabeth Netzkowa.
Page from *U smerti v gostiakh* (*Visiting Death*).

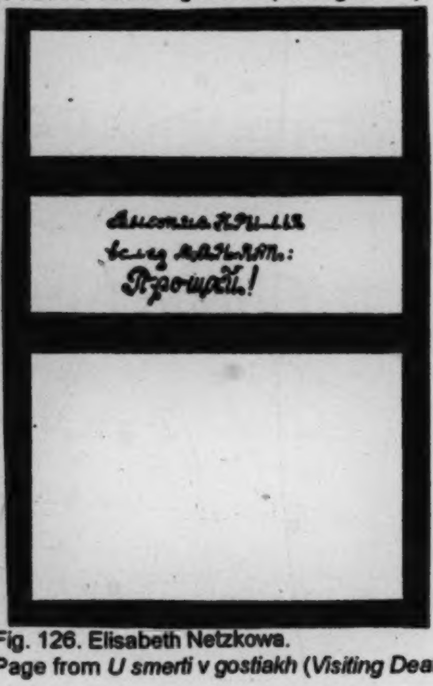
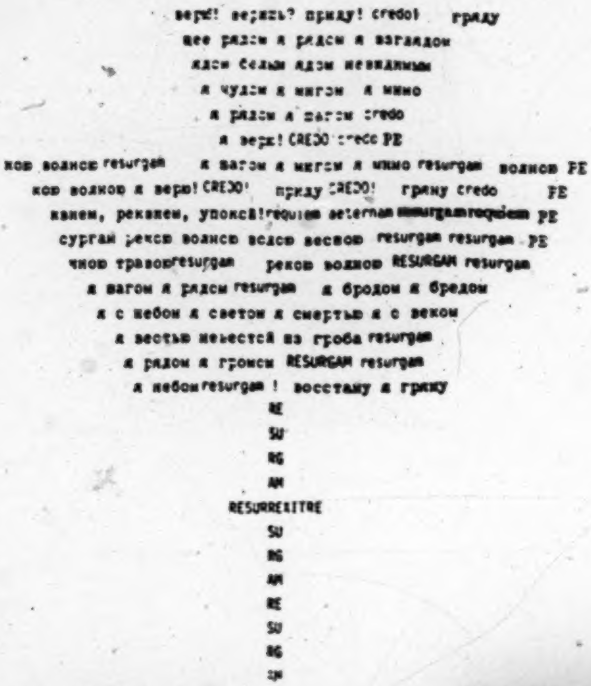


Fig. 126. Elisabeth Netzkowa.
Page from *U smerti v gostiakh* (*Visiting Death*).



верю! веришь? приду! credo! гряду
все рядом я рядом я загадом
ядом белым ядом невидимым
я чудом я мигом я мимо
я рядом я шагом credo
я верю! CREDO credo РЕ
ков волнов resurgam я шагом я мигом я мимо resurgam волнов РЕ
ков волнов я верю! CREDO! приду CREDO! гряну credo РЕ
камен, рекамен, упокой! requiem aeternam resurgamrequiem РЕ
сургам реков волнов весов весвов resurgam resurgam РЕ
чнов травов resurgam реков волнов RESURGAM resurgam
я шагом я рядом resurgam я бродом я бредом
я с небом я светом я смертью я с веком
я вестью небесной из гроба resurgam
я рядом я громом RESURGAM resurgam
я небом resurgam ! восстану я гряну
RE
SU
RG
AM
RESURREXITRE
SU
RG
AM
RE
SU
RG
AM

Fig. 127. Elizabeth Netzkowa.
Page from the requiem "Osen v lazarete nevinnykh sester"
("Autumn in the Lazaretto of Innocent Sisters").

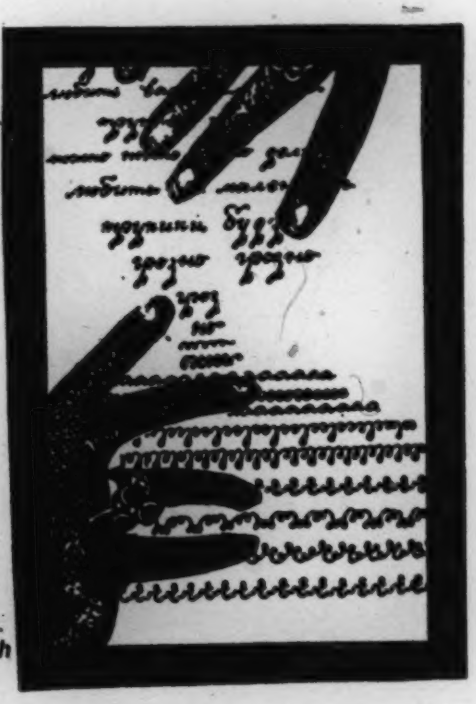


Fig. 128. Elisabeth Netzkowa.
Page from *U smerti v gostiakh*
(*Visiting Death*).

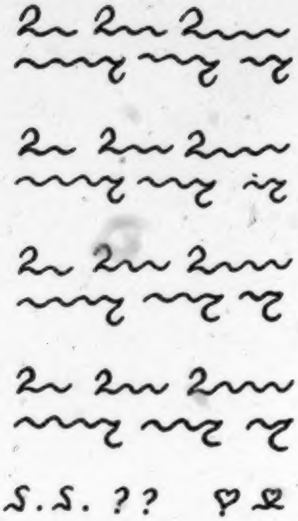


Fig. 129. Valeri Scherstianoj.
"Two on the Waves of Love."

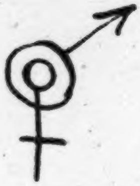


Fig. 130. Valeri Scherstianoj.
"We."

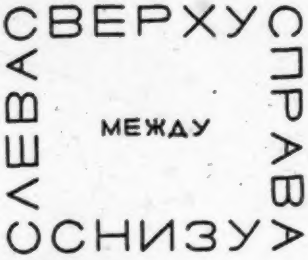


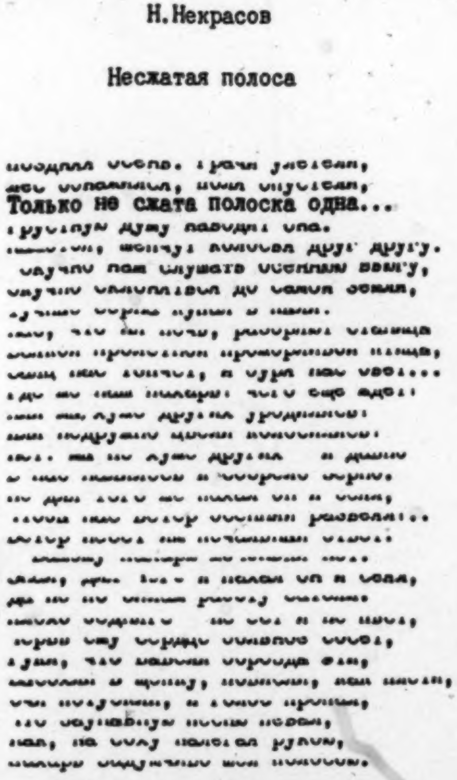
Fig. 131. Vilen Barsky.
"Sverkhu, sprava, snizy, sleva, mezhdu"
("Above, To the Right, Below, To the Left, Between").

ночь
ночь утро
дерево тишина
птица пение
небо свет
человек - молитва
ночь утро
утро

Fig. 132. Vilen Barsky.
"Noch utro" (Night Morning").

ангел
аромат ангел
столп света аромат ангел
ребенок столп света аромат ангел
простыни ребенок столп света аромат ангел
[illegible] и жизнь простыни ребенок столп света аромат ангел
ангел - аромат столп света ребенок простыни след и жизнь
ангел аромат столп света ребенок простыни
ангел аромат столп света ребенок
ангел аромат столп света
ангел аромат
ангел

Fig. 133. Vilen Barsky. "Angel."



Н.Некрасов

Несжатая полоса

Только не сжата полоска одна...

Fig. 134. Vilen Barsky. "Nezzhataia polosa"
("An Unharvested Strip").

к

ОДИНО АЯ ПТИЦА

Fig. 135. Vilen Barsky.
"Odinokaia ptitsa" ("A Lonely Bird").

уединение

удвоение
удвоение

утроение
утроение
утроение

четвер
това
ни
е

Fig. 136. Vilen Barsky.
Untitled composition.

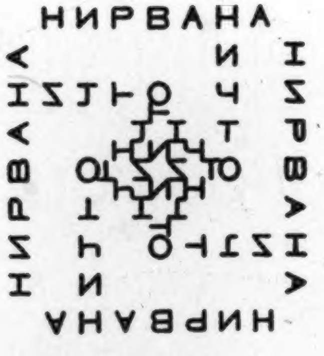

НИРВАНА
НИРВАНА
НИРВАНА
НИРВАНА

Fig. 137. Vilen Barsky.
"Nirvana."

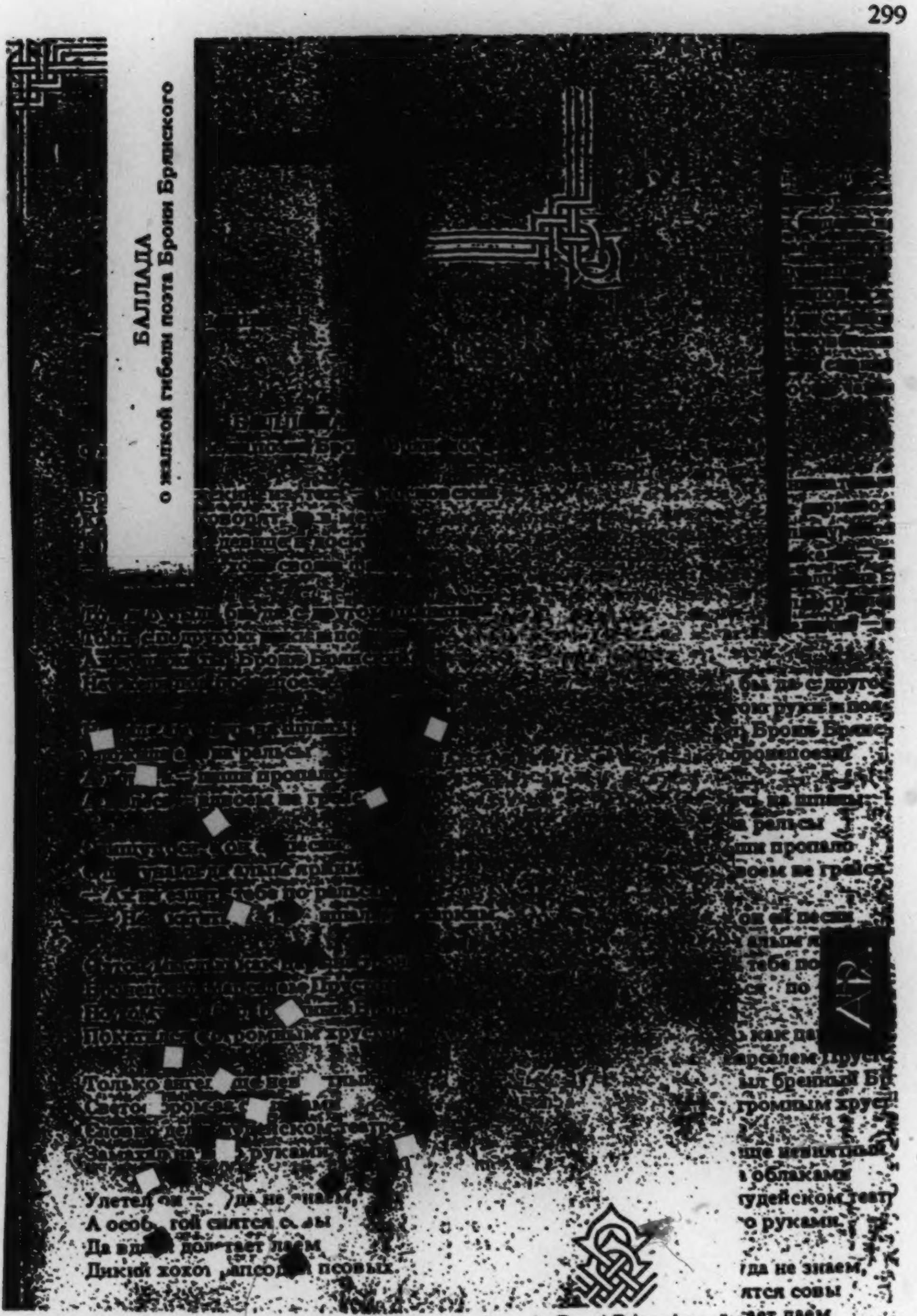

БАЛЛАДА
о жалкой гибели поэта Брони Брянского

Fig. 138. Henri Volohonsky. "Ballada o zhalkoi gibeli poeta Broni Brianskogo" ("Ballad about Miserable Death of the Poet Bronia Brianskii").

КАРТИНА
тушь (бумага) акварель

на черном фоне
кремовая роза
роняет
крошечные
слезы
л
е
п
е
с
т
к
и

Fig. 139. Alex Ocheretyansky. "Kartina" ("Picture").

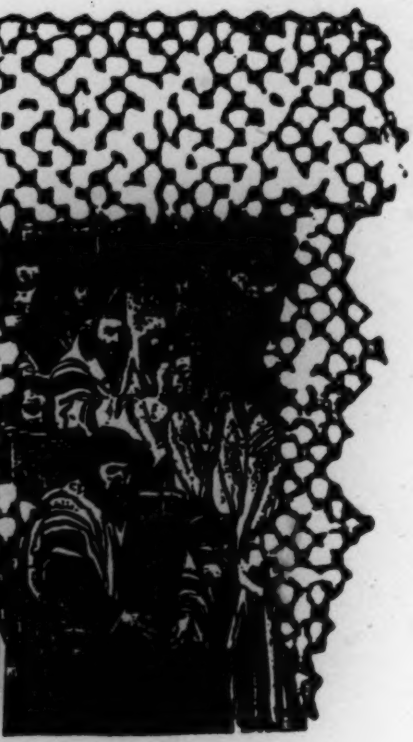


Fig. 140. Alex Ocheretyansky. Anthropomorphized letter composition.

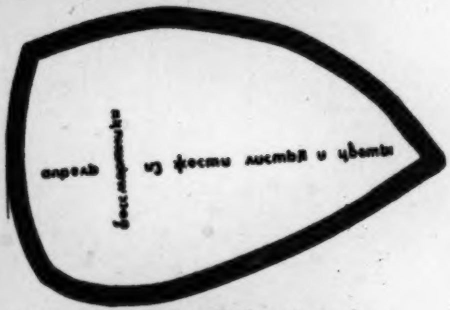
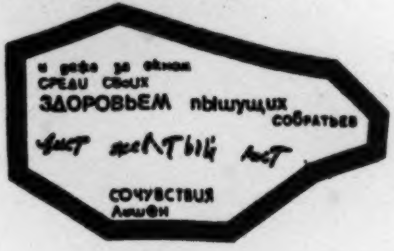

апрель
бессмертники
из кости листья и цветы

Fig. 142-143. Alex Ocheretyansky. From the cycle "Listia" ("Leaves").


СРЕДИ СВОИХ
ЗДОРОВЬЕМ пышущих
собратьев
лист желтый лист
сочувствия
лишен

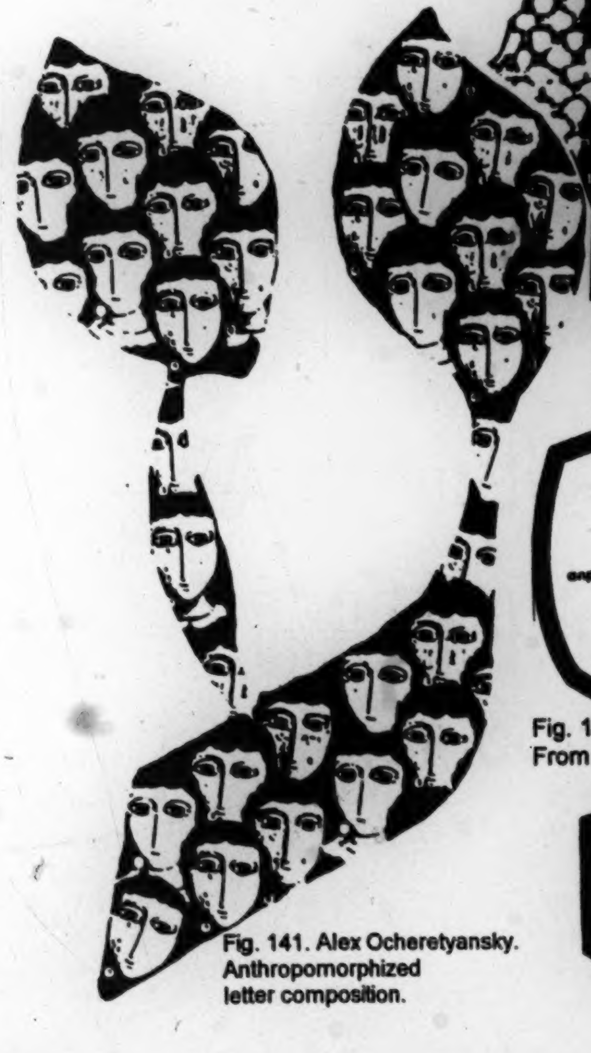


Fig. 141. Alex Ocheretyansky. Anthropomorphized letter composition.

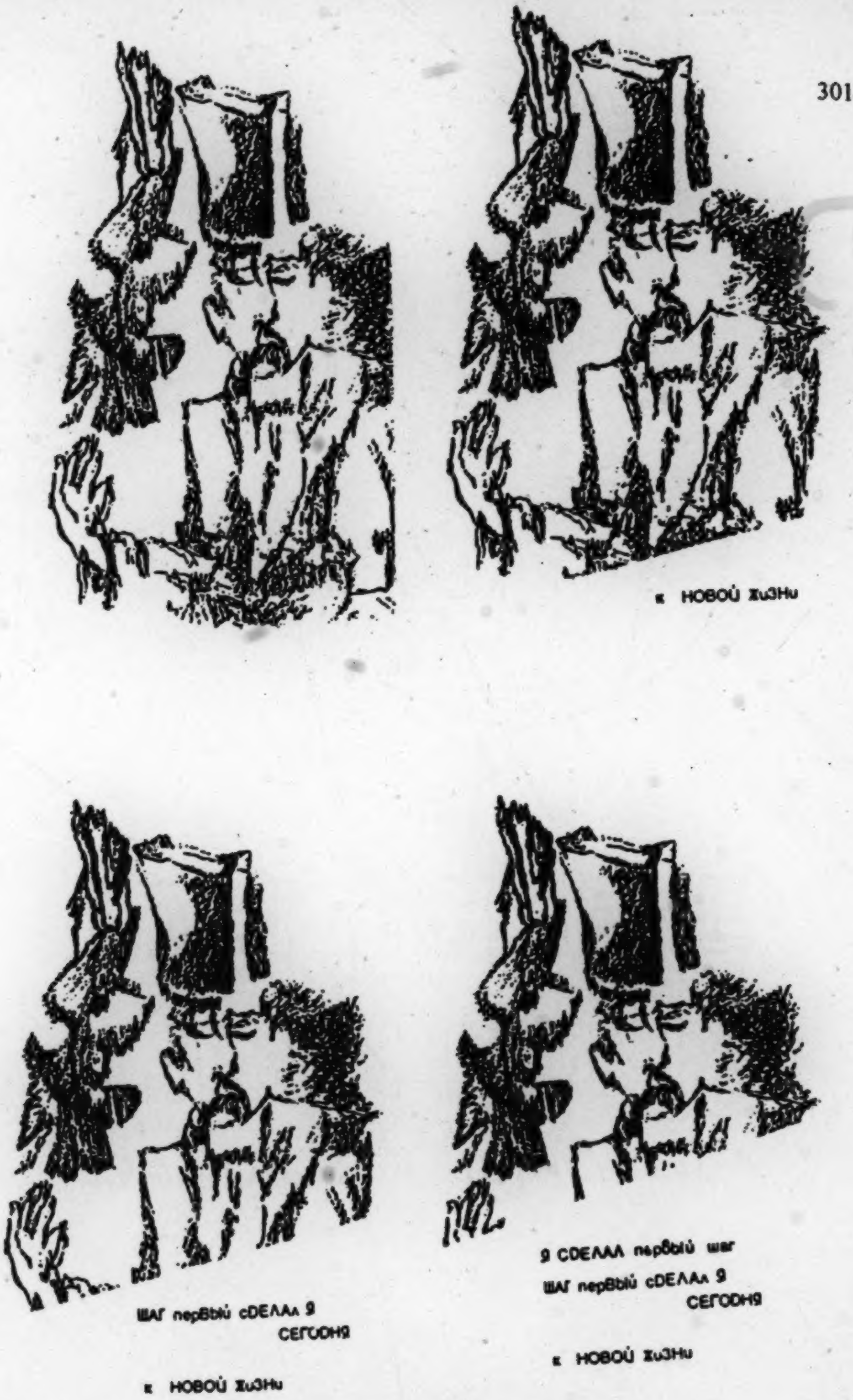
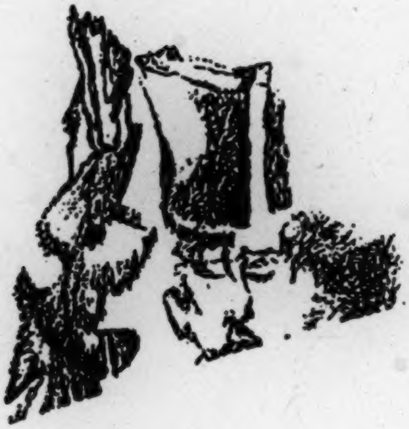

к НОВОЙ жиЗНи
ШАГ первый сДЕЛАЛ я
СЕГОДНЯ
к НОВОЙ жиЗНи
я СДЕЛАЛ первый шаг
ШАГ первый сДЕЛАЛ я
СЕГОДНЯ
к НОВОЙ жиЗНи

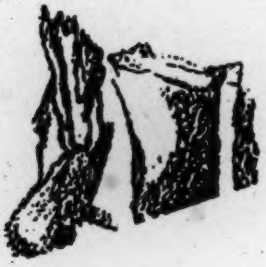
Fig. 144 a-h. Alex Ocheretyansky. "Stuxopus" ("Writing by Drawing").



и ТАК СкаЗАЛ:
Я СДЕЛАЛ первый шаг

ШАГ перВый сДЕЛАл Я
СЕГОДНЯ

к НОВОЙ ЖиЗНи

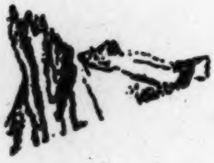


РАШпиЛЕМ ЗАЧисТиЛ

и ТАК СкаЗАЛ:
Я СДЕЛАЛ первый шаг

ШАГ перВый сДЕЛАл Я
СЕГОДНЯ

к НОВОЙ ЖиЗНи



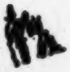
НОЖОМ попрАВил

РАШпиЛЕМ ЗАЧисТиЛ

и ТАК СкаЗАЛ:
Я СДЕЛАЛ первый шаг

ШАГ перВый сДЕЛАл Я
СЕГОДНЯ

к НОВОЙ ЖиЗНи



ОН ОТРУБил НЕ пальцЕМ - ТОпоРОМ

НОЖОМ попрАВил

РАШпиЛЕМ ЗАЧисТиЛ

и ТАК СкаЗАЛ:
Я СДЕЛАЛ первый шаг

ШАГ перВый сДЕЛАл Я
СЕГОДНЯ

к НОВОЙ ЖиЗНи

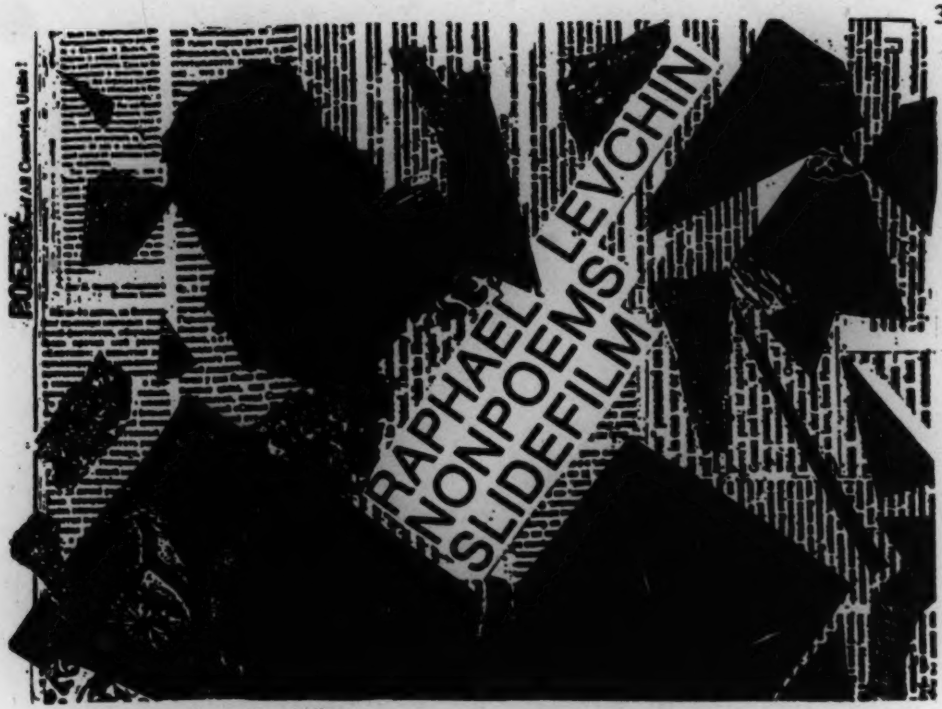
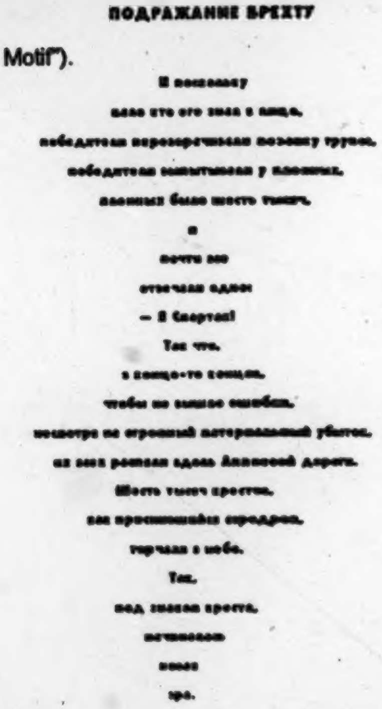

of All Countries, Unite!
RAPHAEL LEVCHIN
NONPOEMS
SLIDEFILM

Fig. 145. Rafael Levchin. Collage.

Fig. 146. Rafael Levchin.
"Podrazhanie Brekhtu" ("In Brecht's Motif").



ПОДРАЖАНИЕ БРЕХТУ

**Один — два**

([illegible])

Один.
Два.
Один.
Два.
Один,
Два.
Два.
Один.
Два.
Один.
Два.
Один.
Один.
Один.
Ого!
Ні одного.

*[illegible]*
*[illegible]*

Fig. 147. Mykola Kholodnyi.
"Odyn-dva" ("One-two").

**Формула шлюбної ночі**

([illegible])

$C_2H_5OH \left(\frac{1\ кг}{2}\right)$

$I—O$

$C_{18}H_{32}O_2 + C_{18}H_{32}O_2$

*[illegible]*

Fig. 148. Mykola Kholodnyi.
"Formula shliubnoi nochi"
("Formula of A Conjugal Night").

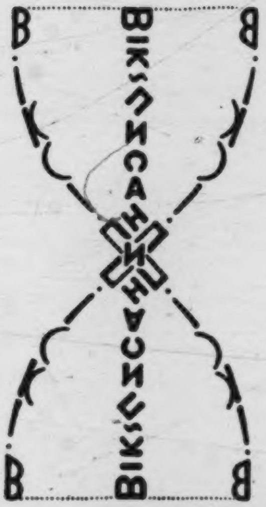


Fig. 149. Myroslav Korol, and Mykola Miroshnychenko.
Visual palindrome.

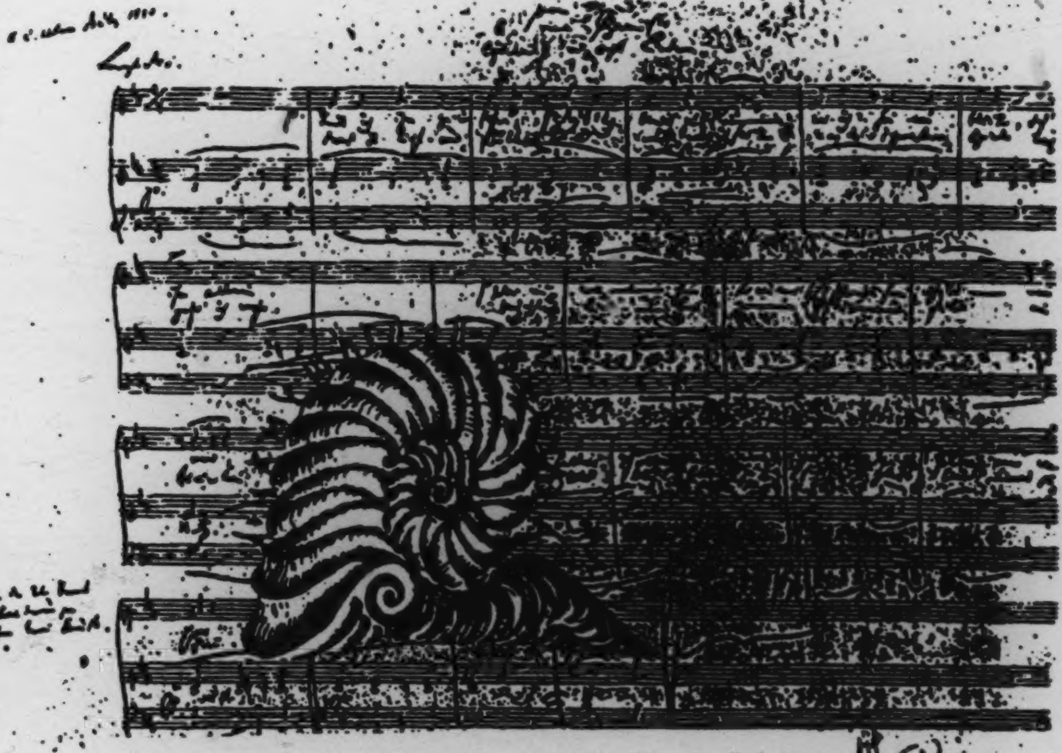


Fig. 150. Myroslav Korol, and Mykola Miroshnychenko. Visual palindrome.

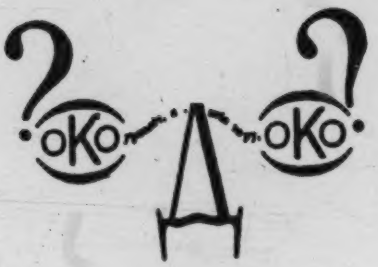


Fig. 151. Mykola Miroshnychenko.
Visual palindrome.

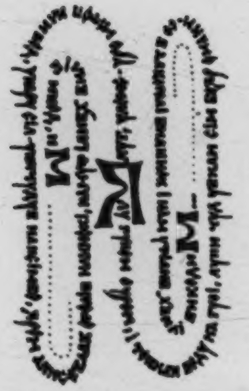


Fig. 152. Volkhv Slovovezha,
and Mykola Miroshnychenko.
Visual palindrome.

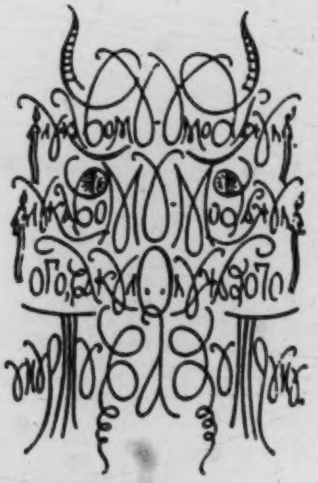


Fig. 153. Volkhv Slovovezha,
and Anatolii Moisiienko.
Visual palindrome.

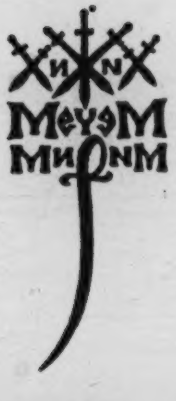


Fig. 154. Volkhv Slovovezha,
and Anatolii Moisiienko.
Visual palindrome.

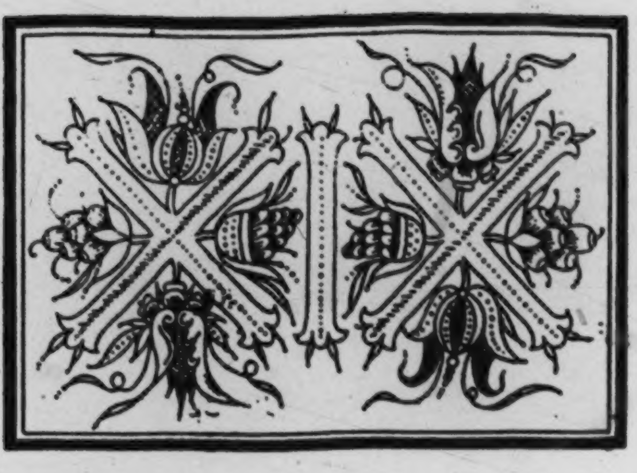


Fig. 155. Volkhv Slovovezha.
Nondiscursive palindromic composition.

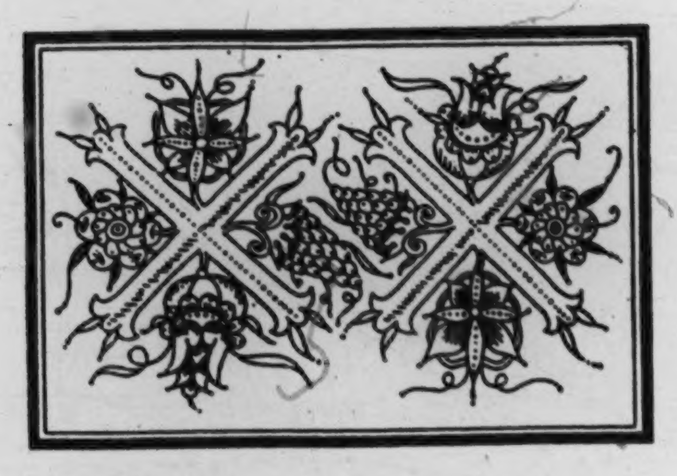


Fig. 156. Volkhv Slovovezha.
Nondiscursive palindromic composition.

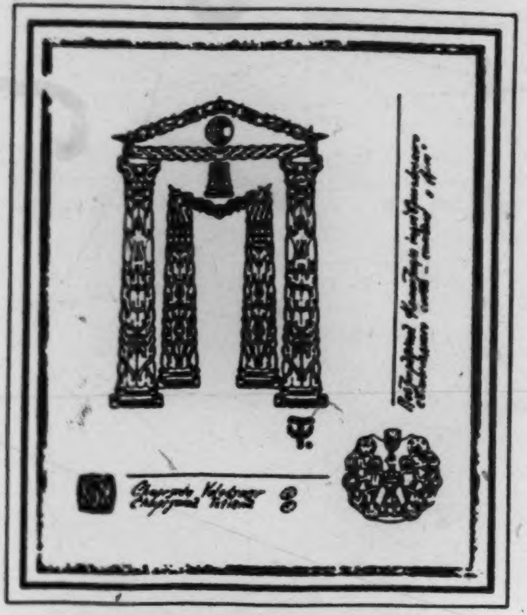


Fig. 157. Volkhv Slovovezha, and Tetiana Chuprynina. "Dim" ("House").

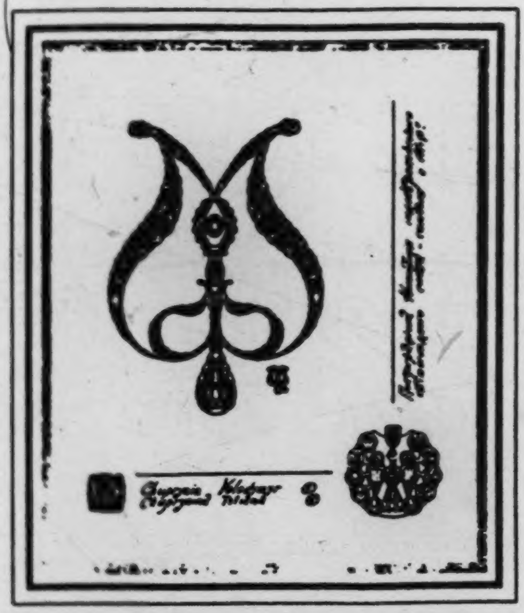
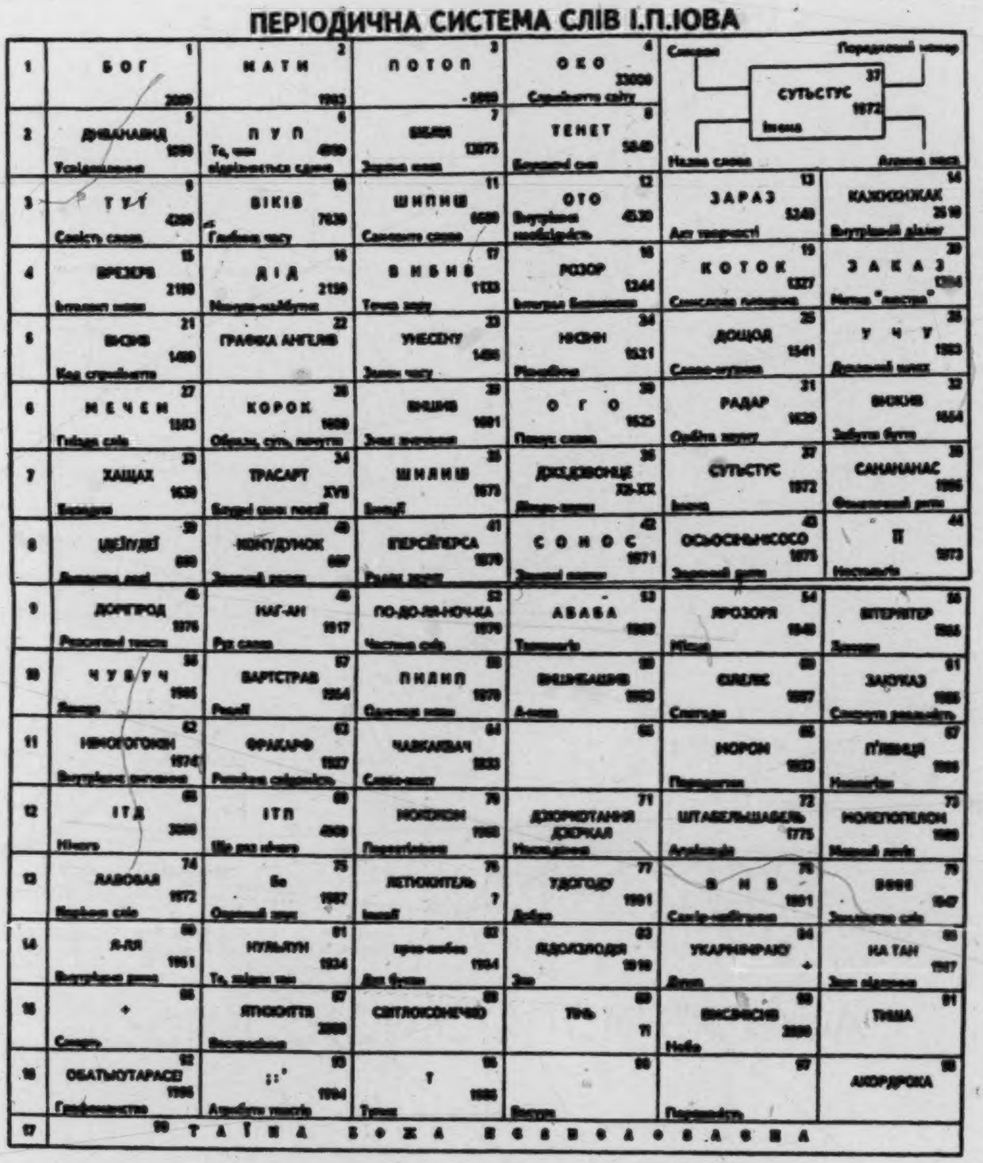


Fig. 158. Volkhv Slovovezha, and Tetiana Chuprynina. "Mif" ("Myth").



ПЕРІОДИЧНА СИСТЕМА СЛІВ І.П.ІОВА

Fig. 159. Ivan Iov. "Peryodychna systema sliv" ("The Periodic Table of Words").

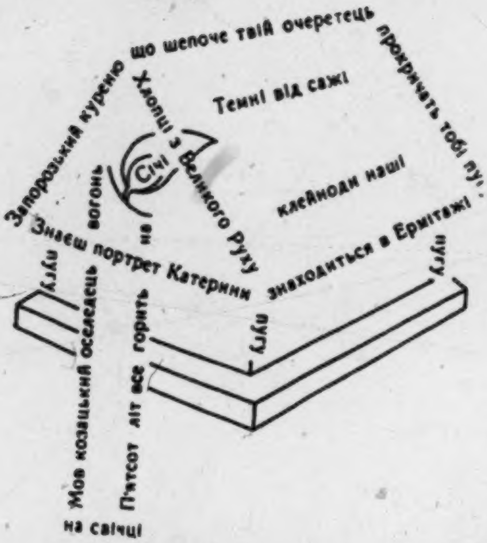

Запорозький курeню що шепоче твій очеретець
прокричать тобі пуг.
Хлопці з Великого Руху
Січі
Темні від сажі
клейноди наші
вогонь
не
Знаєш портрет Катерини знаходиться в Ермітажі
пугу
пугу
пугу
Мов козацький оселедець
П'ятсот літ все горить
на свічці

Fig. 160. Mykola Luhovyk.
"Na spomyn z dnia 500-richchia Sichi"
("In Remembrance of the 500th
Anniversary of Sich").

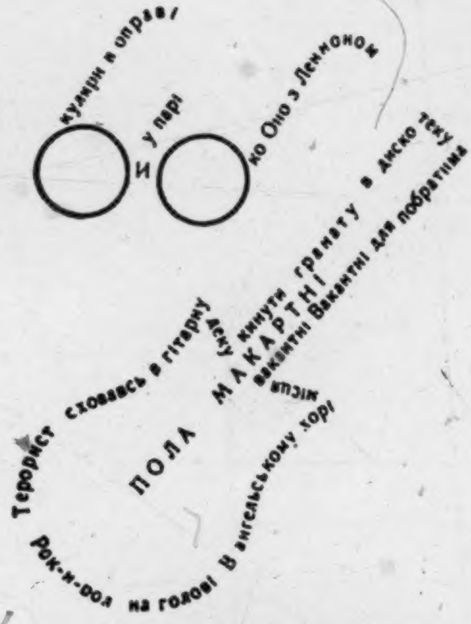

кулярн в оправі
у парі
И
ко Оно з Ленноном
Терорист сховавсь в гітарну
деку
кинути гранату в диско теку
ПОЛА МАКАРТНІ
вакантні Вакантні для побратима
місця
в англійському хорі
Рок-н-рол на голові

Fig. 161. Mykola Luhovyk.
"Pam"ati Dzhona Lennona"
("In Memory of John Lennon").

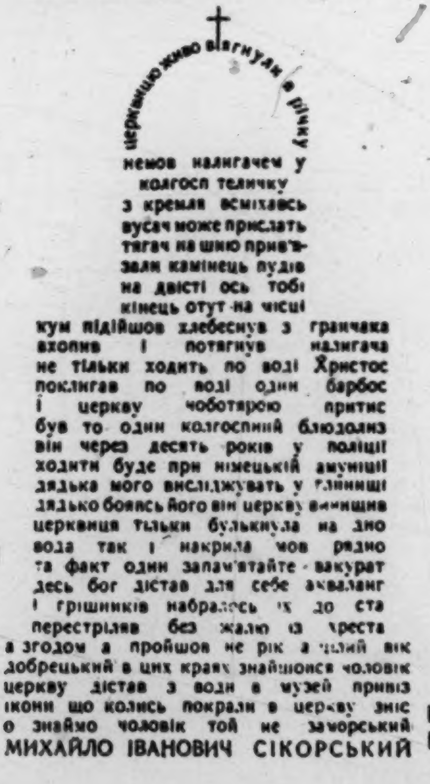

церквицю живо вігнули в річку
немов налигачем у
колгосп телячку
з кремля всміхавсь
вусач може прислать
тягач на шию прив'я-
зали камінець пудів
на двісті ось тобі
кінець отут на чисці
кум підійшов хлебеснув з гранчака
вхопив і потягнув налигача
не тільки ходить по воді Христос
поклигав по воді один барбос
і церкву чоботярою притис
був то один колгоспний блюдолиз
він через десять років у поліції
ходити буде при німецькій амуніції
дядька мого вислiджувать у глинищі
дядько боявсь його він церкву винищив
церквиця тільки булькнула на дно
вода так і накрила мов рядно
та факт один запам'ятайте - вакурат
десь бог дістав для себе акваланг
і грішників набралось їх до ста
перестріляв без жалю із хреста
а згодом а пройшов не рік а цілий вік
добрецький в цих краях знайшовся чоловік
церкву дістав з води в музей привіз
ікони що колись покрали в церкву зніс
о знаймо чоловік той не заморський
МИХАЙЛО ІВАНОВИЧ СІКОРСЬКИЙ

Fig. 162. Mykola Luhovyk.
Poem shaped as a temple.

## ФЕНІКС-ПТАХ ІЗ ЗЕМЕЛЬ РУСТИХ

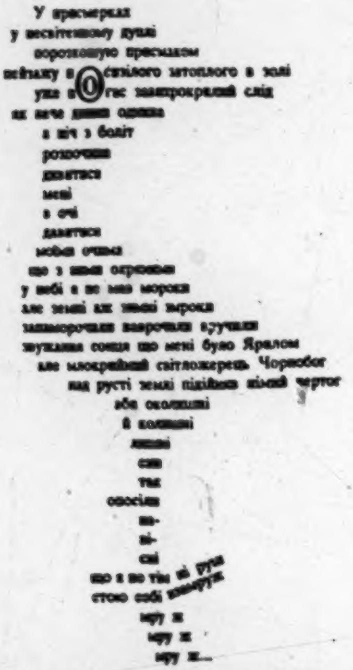
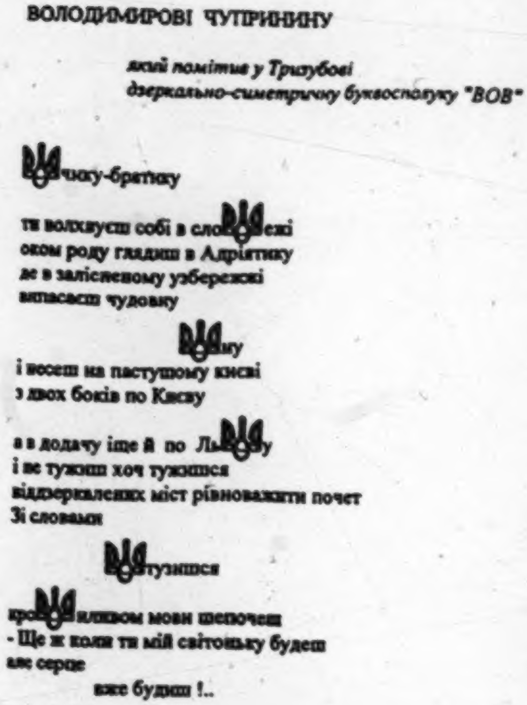


Fig. 163. Mykola Miroshnychenko.
"Feniks-ptakh iz zemel rustykh"
("Phoenix-bird from the Ruthenian Lands").



## ВОЛОДИМИРОВІ ЧУПРИНИНУ

*який помітив у Тризубові*
*дзеркально-симетричну буквосполуку "ВОВ"*

🔱чику-братику

ти волхвуєш собі в сло🔱екі
оком роду гладиш в Адріатику
де в залісненому узбережжі
випасаєш чудовну

🔱ну
і носиш на пастушому кисві
з двох боків по Києву

а в додачу іще й по Ль🔱у
і не тужиш хоч тужишся
віддзеркалених міст рівноважити почет
Зі словами

🔱тузишся

про🔱илквом мови шепочеш
- Ще ж коли ти мій світоньку будеш
але серце
вже будиш !..

Fig. 164. Mykola Miroshnychenko.
Poem dedicated to Volodymyr Chuprynin.

* * *

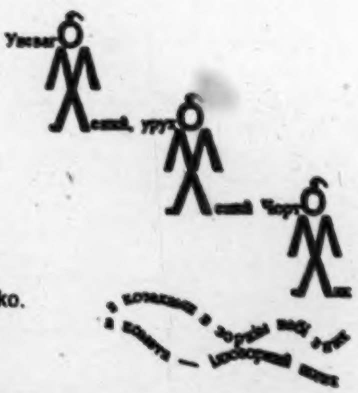


Fig. 165. Mykola Miroshnychenko.
Visual composition with
anthropomorphized letters.

## Балада про пісковий годинник

*Григорію Храпачу*

Замовкніть, нарешті, знімайте і шитьте!
Важка домовина лягла на плече...
З села на відчинений цвинтар
шляхом родовід вечорово тече.
Хрещені, що коїться з нами?!
У безвість же повінь родин
з тривогами-снами
на крилах рядини.
Забуті, вдові —
пирій і... пиріг.
Утома.
Вдома.
Поріг.
Солома
доріг.
Сльозина
Іржаво тече.
Пече — не втече.
Не зловиш губами,
бо душі стають голубами.
Несем їм сніданки, обіди,
а внук перелився у сивого діда —
отак, як Вкраїна в стражденний Дніпро,
як горе вчорашнє в химерне добро...
Зірками, зерном потеруха ця зблизька —
радійте: у яслах вже Бог, як в колисці...

Fig. 166. Ivan Iov.
"Balada pro piskovyi hodynnyk"
("Ballad of an Hourglass").

## ПІСКОВИЙ ГОДИННИК

З'явилось відчуття непевності падіння
Вгору загортаємось в куліси хмари
Упали поки що не ми в тіні
Тіло, що згубило тінь,— примара
Летаємо тілами діри
Зруйнованого неба
І світять сходи віри
Мучеників ребра
І знову слово
Єднальний стяг
Полина
Буття
Пульс
Куль
Рука
На руці
В очі втіка
Гроза по щоці
Голос пронизує
На дроті нанизані
Іскри що палять дерева
Зависли над полум'ям леви
Навіть зорі заплутались в гриві
Виймають їх астрологи й щасливі
Покотилися всім по всіх дорогах
Одне на всіх ім'я: так називали Бога.

Fig. 167. Neda Nezhdana.
"Piskovyi hodynnyk" (Hourglass").

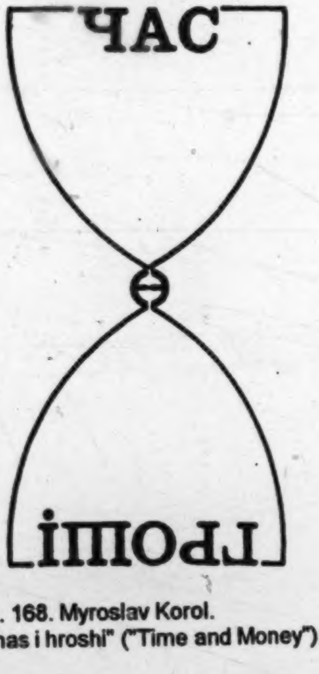


Fig. 168. Myroslav Korol.
"Chas i hroshi" ("Time and Money").

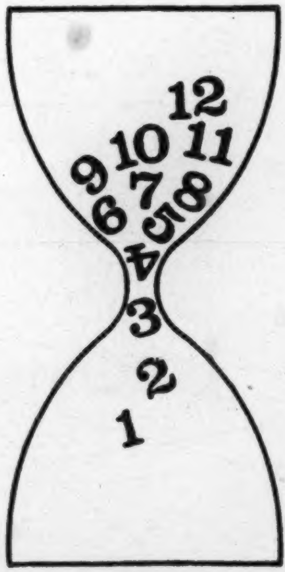


Fig. 169. Myroslav Korol.
Untitled composition.

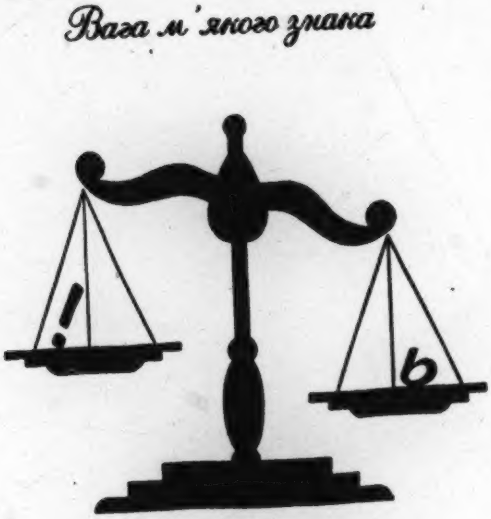

Вага м'якого знака
!
ь

Fig. 170. Ivan Iov. "Vaha miakoho znaka" ("The Weight of the Soft Sign").

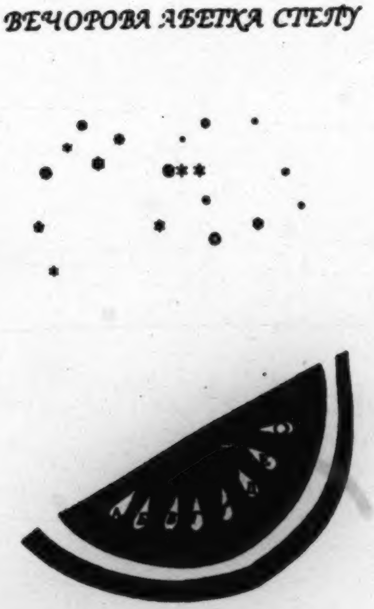

ВЕЧОРОВА АБЕТКА СТЕПУ

Fig. 171. Ivan Iov. "Vecherova Abetka stepu" ("Evening Alphabet of the Steppe").

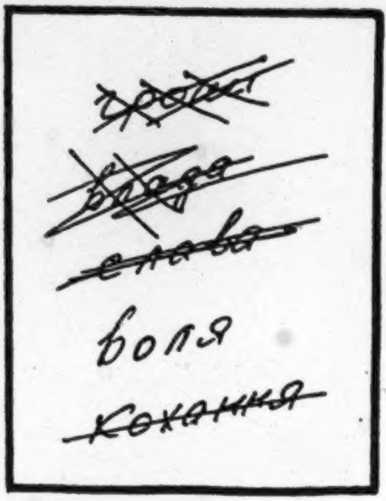

~~влада~~
~~слава~~
воля
~~кохання~~

Fig. 172. Vasyl Trubai.
"Odne z p"iaty" ("One Out of Five").

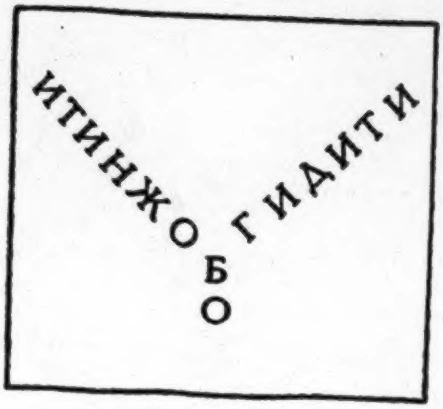

ИТИНЖО
Б
О
ГИДИТИ

Fig. 173. Vasyl Trubai.
"Shyzofrenik" (Schizophrenic").

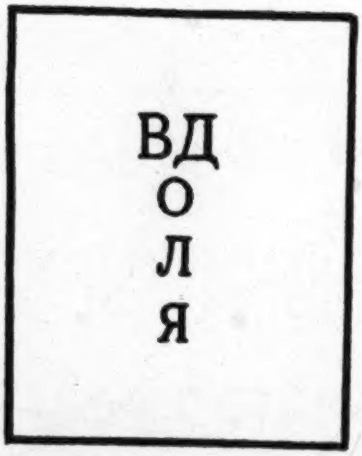


Fig. 174. Vasyl Trubai.
"Siamski Blyzniuki" ("Siamese Twins").

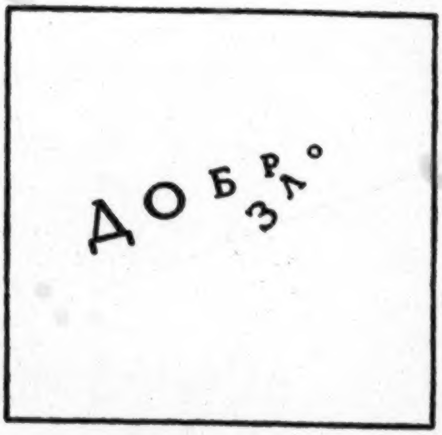


Fig. 175. Vasyl Trubai.
"Kliuch" ("The Clue").

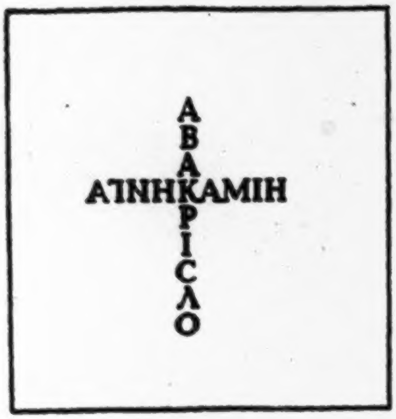


Fig. 176. Vasyl Trubai.
"Spokii" ("Quiet").

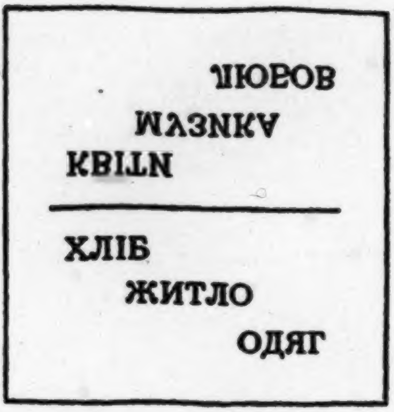

ЛЮБОВ
МУЗИКА
КВІТИ
ХЛІБ
ЖИТЛО
ОДЯГ

Fig. 177. Vasyl Trubai.
"Liusterko" ("Looking-glass").

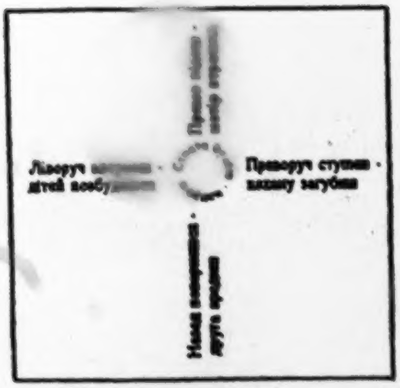

Праворуч ступиш -
власну загубиш

Fig. 178. Vasyl Trubai.
"Zugzwang."

Fig. 179. Vasyl Trubai.
"Kinets svitu" ("The End of the World").

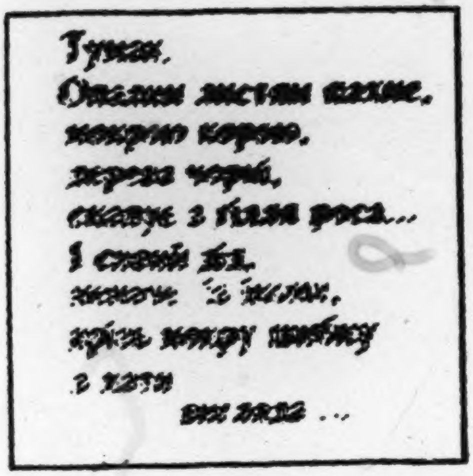
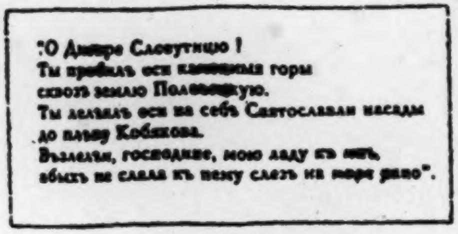
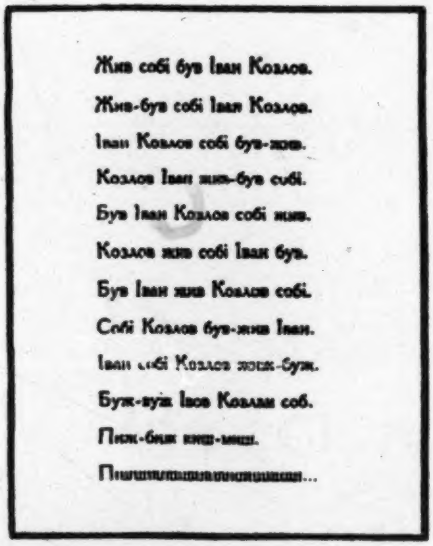


Fig. 180. Vasyl Trubai. "Osinnia akvarel" ("Autumn Watercolor").



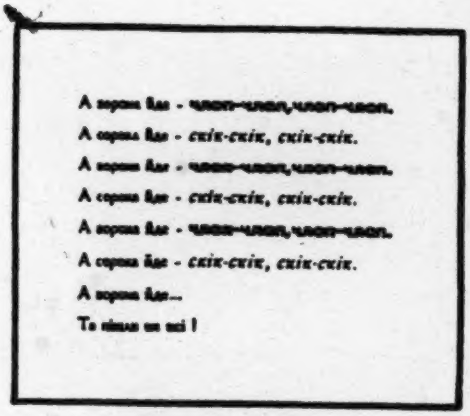
"О Днепре Словутицю !
Ты пр[illegible]илъ еси [illegible] горы
сквозѣ землю Пол[illegible]кую.
Ты лелѣялъ еси на себѣ Святославли насады
до плъку Кобякова.
Възлелѣи, господине, мою ладу къ [illegible],
а быхъ не слала къ нему слезъ на [illegible] рано".

Fig. 181. Vasyl Trubai. "Sliozy Iaroslavny" ("Tears of Iaroslavna").



Жив собі був Іван Козлов.
Жив-був собі Іван Козлов.
Іван Козлов собі був-жив.
Козлов Іван жив-був собі.
Був Іван Козлов собі жив.
Козлов жив собі Іван був.
Був Іван жив Козлов собі.
Собі Козлов був-жив Іван.
Іван собі Козлов жиж-буж.
Бyж-вуж Івов Козлам соб.
Пиж-биж киш-миш.
П[illegible]...

Fig. 182. Vasyl Trubai. "Muky tvorchosti" ("Throes of creation").



А ворона їде - [illegible].
А сорока їде - *скік-скік, скік-скік.*
А ворона їде - [illegible].
А сорока їде - *скік-скік, скік-скік.*
А ворона їде - [illegible].
А сорока їде - *скік-скік, скік-скік.*
А ворона їде...
Та [illegible] всі !

Fig. 183. Vasyl Trubai. "Soroka-Vorona" (Magpie-Crow").

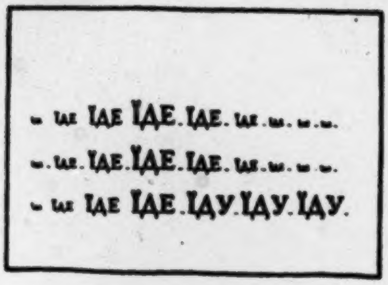

ш ІДЕ ІДЕ. ІДЕ. ш. ш. ш. ш.
ш. ІДЕ. ІДЕ. ІДЕ. ш. ш. ш. ш.
ш ІДЕ ІДЕ. ІДУ. ІДУ. ІДУ.

Fig. 184. Vasyl Trubai.
"Avto-stop" ("Hitch-hiking").

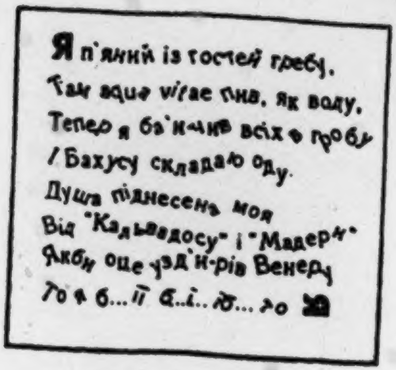

Я п'яний із гостей гребу.
Там aqua vitae пив, як воду.
Тепер я ба'н-чив всіх в пробу
/ Бахусу складаю оду.
Душа піднесена моя
Від "Кальвадосу" і "Мадери"
Якби оце узд'н-рів Венеру
То я б... ії б..і.. ю... до

Fig. 186. Vasyl Trubai.
"Oda Bakhusu" ("Ode to Bacchus").

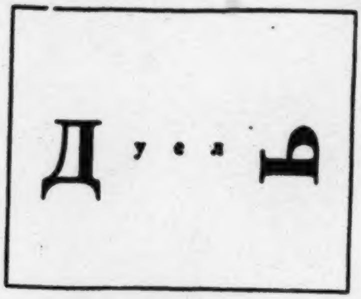
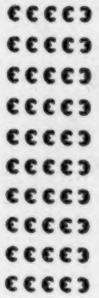


Fig. 185. Vasyl Trubai.
"Duel" ("Duel").

Fig. 189. Mykola Soroka.
"P"iata kolona" ("The Fifth Column").



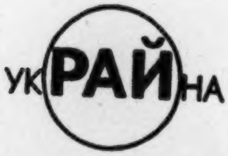


Fig. 187. Mykola Soroka.
Untitled visual poem.

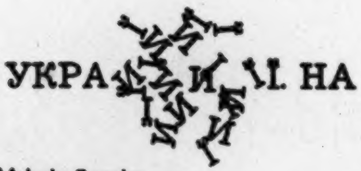


Fig. 188. Mykola Soroka.
"Shche ne vmerla Ukraina..." ("Ukraine still lives on. . .").

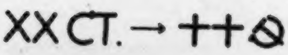


Fig. 190. Mykola Soroka.
"Dynamika XX st. "
("Dymanics of the XXth century").

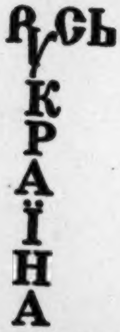

РУСЬ
УКРАЇНА

Fig. 191. Mykola Soroka.
Untitled visual poem.

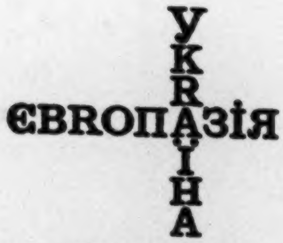
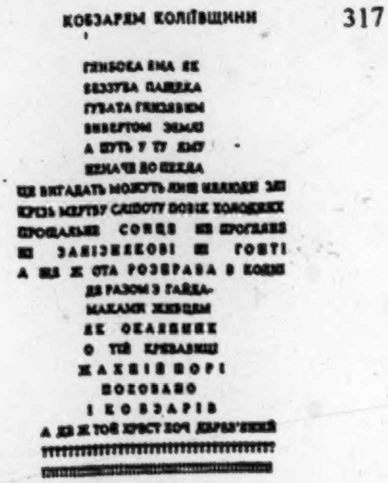

ЄВROПАЗІЯ
УКRАЇНА

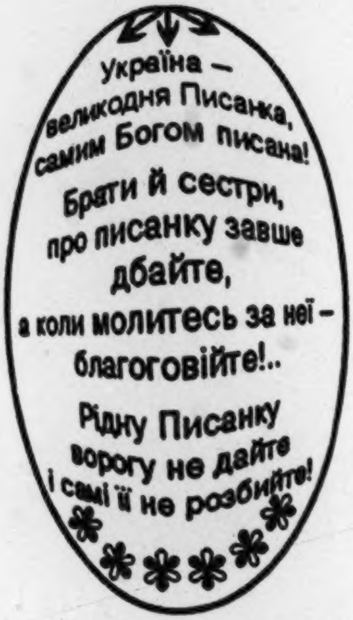
Fig. 192. Myroslav Korol.
Untitled visual poem.



КОБЗАРЯМ КОЛІЇВЩИНИ 317

ГЛИБОКА ЯМА ЯК
БЕЗЗУБА ПАЩЕКА
ГУБАТА ГНИЛЯКИМ
ВИВЕРТОМ ЗЕМЛІ
А ПУТЬ У ТУ ЯМУ
ІНАЧЕ ДО ПЕКЛА
ЩЕ ВИГАДАТЬ МОЖУТЬ ЛИШ [illegible] ЗЛІ
КРІЗЬ МЕРТВУ СЛІПОТУ ПОВІК ХОЛОДНИХ
ПРОЩАЛЬНЕ СОНЦЕ НЕ ПРОГЛЯНЕ
НІ ЗАЛІЗНЯКОВІ НІ ГОНТІ
А ДЕ Ж ОТА РОЗПРАВА В КОДНІ
ДЕ РАЗОМ З ГАЙДА-
МАКАМИ ЖИВЦЕМ
ЯК ОКАЯННИХ
О ТІЙ КРИВАВІЙ
ЖАХНІЙ ПОРІ
ПОХОВАНО
І КОБЗАРІВ
А ДЕ Ж ТОЙ ХРЕСТ ХОЧ ДЕРЕВ'ЯНИЙ
??????????????????????????????????

Fig. 194. Mykola Sarma-Sokolovskyi.
"Kobzariam Koliivshchyny" ("To Kobzars of Koliivshyna").



Україна –
великодня Писанка,
самим Богом писана!
Брати й сестри,
про писанку завше
дбайте,
а коли молитесь за неї –
благоговійте!..
Рідну Писанку
ворогу не дайте
і самі її не розбийте!

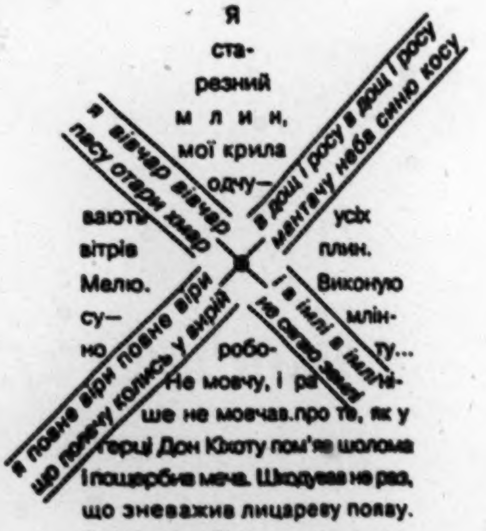
Fig. 193. Mykola Sarma-Sokolovskyi.
"Ukraina" ("Ukraine").

а воно повне серцями людей
у серці - серце, а в нім -
ще серце, але і в тім
також є серце.
Не грайтеся
неначебто
"матрьош-
кою"

Fig. 196. Mykola Sarma-Sokolovskyi.
"Naiserdechnishe sertse"
("The Most Heart-felt Heart").

Я
велет дзвін
мої стугніння
ніби сивої гала
сягали гей сягали
далекомрежних гін
і сатанів московин
Петро шалений цар
що я Мазепин дар
а в покомунені часи
як в Україноньці-Русі
біди спізнали храми всі
мене відступники й убивці
турнули так неначе з небесі
з білощої дохмарної дзвіниці
Тепер я експонат в дворі музею
де мліє зелен-сад де кам'яні баби
прибились аж до нас із давньої доби
й кульгують в закутковій цілою сім'єю
Я тут собі мовчу немов ховаю таємницю
в самому серці розпреславної Полтави
Одначе я ще марю я ще мрію про Дзвінницю
зоревозвишеної земної Української Держави.

Fig. 195. Mykola Sarma-Sokolovskyi.
"Dzvin Hetmana Ivana Mazepy"
("The Bell of Hetman Ivan Mazepa").



я віячар віячар
пасу отари хмар
в дощ і росу в дощ і росу
мантачу неба синю косу
і в імлі в імлі
не сягаю землі
я повне віри повне віри
що полечу колись у вирій

Я
ста-
резний
м л и н,
мої крила
одчу-
вають усіх
вітрів плин.
Мелю. Виконую
су- млін-
но робо- ту...
Не мовчу, і ра-ні-
ше не мовчав.про те, як у
серці Дон Кіхоту пом'яв шолома
і пощербив меча. Шкодував не раз,
що зневажив лицареву появу.
Тепер не збіжжя мелю, а час,
як звичайне жито, всім на
пожиток, а Дон Кіхотові – на вічну славу!

Fig. 197. Mykola Sarma-Sokolovskyi.
"Vitriak" ("The Mill").

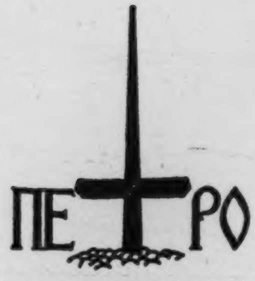


Fig. 198. Myroslav Korol.
"Petro" ("Peter").

ABRACADABRA
ABRACADABR
ABRACADAB
ABRACADA
ABRACAD
ABRACA
ABRAC
ABRA
ABR
AB
A

Fig. 199. Serenus Samonicus.
Triangular abraxas.

АБРАКАДАБРА
АБРАКАДАБР
АБРАКАДАБ
АВАНГАРД
АВАНГАР
АВАНГА
АВАНГ
АВАН
АВА
АВ
А

Fig. 200. Myroslav Korol.
Parody on Samonicus's
triangular abraxas.

Рóку
А҃з млéком питáла
Х҃риста в лѣтех мáла,
Ч҃истаго младенца
А҃ твáрем первéнца. ||

Fig. 201. Ivan Velychkovskyi.
Chronogram.

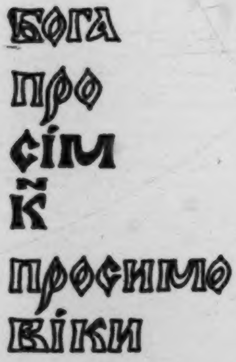


Fig. 202. Volkhv Slovovezha.
Chronogramic poem.

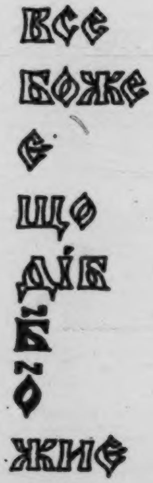
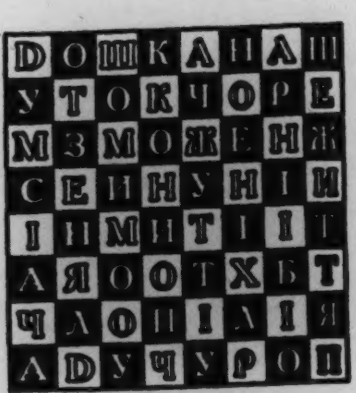


Fig. 203. Volkhv Slovovezha.
Chronogramic poem.



| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Д | О | Ш | К | А | Н | А | Ш |
| У | Т | О | К | Ч | О | Р | Е |
| М | З | М | О | Ж | Е | Н | Ж |
| С | Е | И | Н | У | Н | І | И |
| І | Н | М | И | Т | І | І | Т |
| А | Я | О | О | Т | Х | Б | Т |
| Ч | Л | О | П | І | Л | І | Я |
| Л | Д | У | Ч | У | Р | О | П |

Fig. 204. Mykola Soroka.
Square poem.

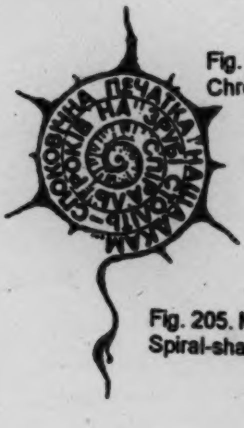


Fig. 205. Myroslav Korol.
Spiral-shaped labyrinth.

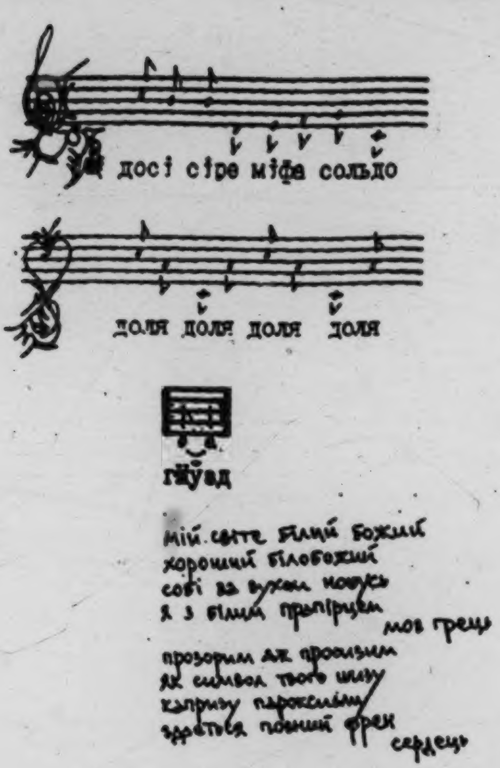
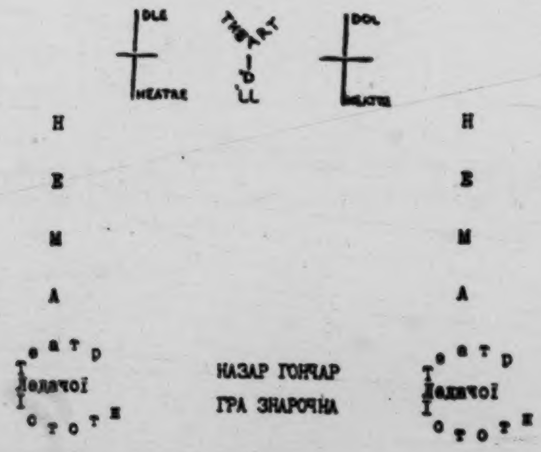

досі сіре міфа сольдо
доля доля доля доля
гйуад
мій світе білий божий
хороший білобожий
собі за вухом ношусь
я з білим пропірцем
мов грець
прозорим аж прозимим
як символ твого шилу
капризу пароксизму
здається повний френ
сердець

Fig. 206. Nazar Honchar. Musical poem.

Fig. 207. Nazar Honchar. "Idle Theatre."


IDLE
THEATRE
THEATRT
D
LL
IDOL
THEATRE
НЕМА
театр
ледачої
сототе
НАЗАР ГОНЧАР
ГРА ЗНАРОЧНА

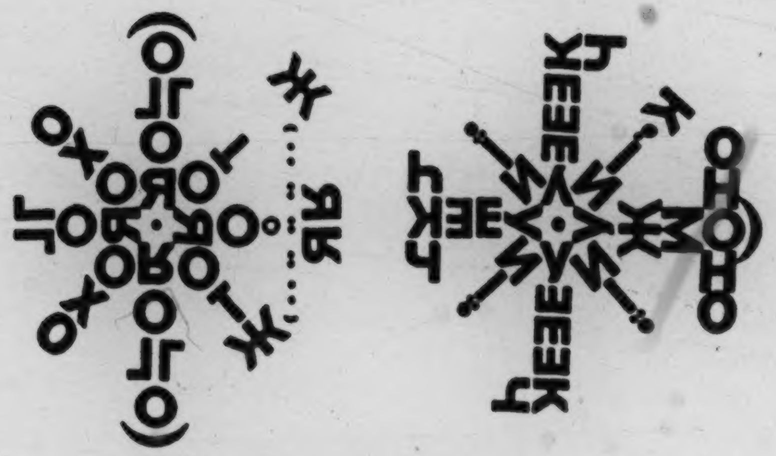


Fig. 208-209. Roman Sadlovskyi. Letter compositions.

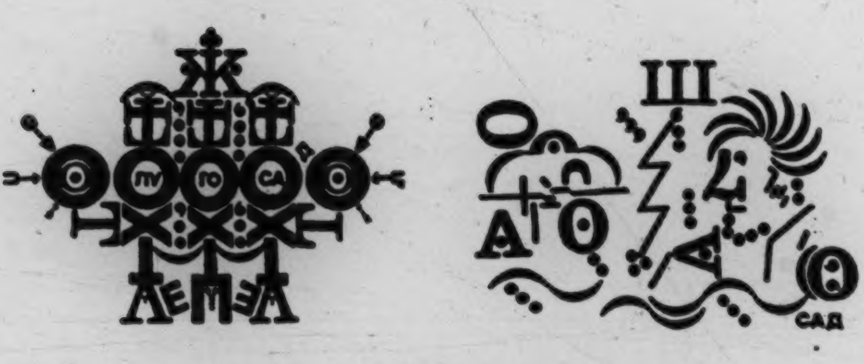
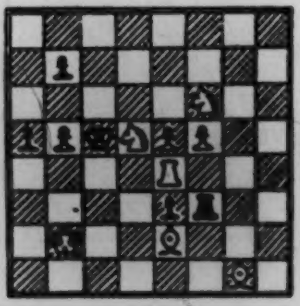


Fig. 210-211. Roman Sadlovskyi. Letter compositions.

Піти –
1.Т: е3?
Чи
1.К: е3! –
Щоб повернутися
На крути своя:
2.Те4х.
2.Ked5x.
І щоб іншому
Забракло сил
Повернутися.



"Sahovska kompozicia", (Югославия),1991

Fig. 212. Anatolii Moisiienko. Chess poem.

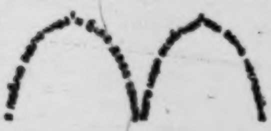


Fig. 213. Mykola Soroka. "Erotychna poeziia" ("Erotic Poem").

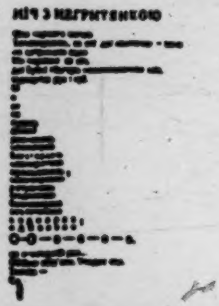


Fig. 215. Viktor Melnyk. "Nich z nehritiankoiu." ("A Night With a Black Woman").

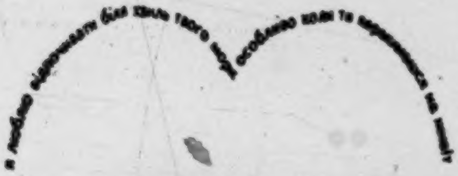


Fig. 214. Viktor Melnyk. "Duzhe erotychna poeziia" ("Very Erotic Poem").

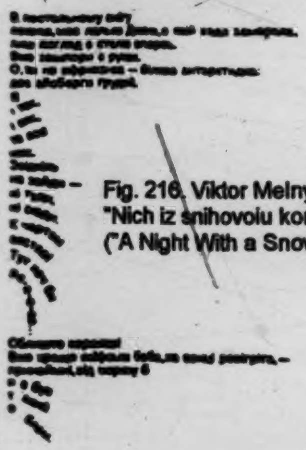


Fig. 216. Viktor Melnyk. "Nich iz snihovoiu korolevoiu." ("A Night With a Snow Queen").

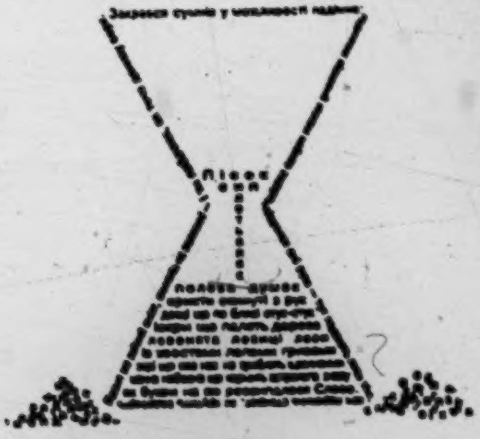
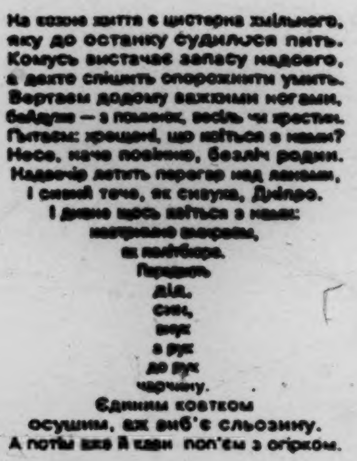


Fig. 217. Viktor Melnyk. "Znaishovsia vykhid" ("A Solution Has Been Found")



На кожне життя є цистерна хмільного,
яку до останку судилося пить.
Комусь вистачає запасу надовго,
а декто спішить опорожнити умить.
Вертаєм додому важкими ногами,
байдуже — з поминок, весіль чи хрестин.
Питаєм: хрещені, що коїться з нами?
Несе, наче повінню, безліч родин.
Надвечір летить перегар над ланами,
І синій тече, як сивуха, Дніпро.
І дивне щось коїться з нами:
[illegible],
як [illegible].
Передають
дід,
син,
внук
з рук
до рук
чарчину.
Єдиним ковтком
осушим, аж виб'є сльозину.
А потім вже й [illegible] поп'єм з огірком.

Fig. 218. Viktor Melnyk. "Merylo Zhyttia" ("The Measure of Life").

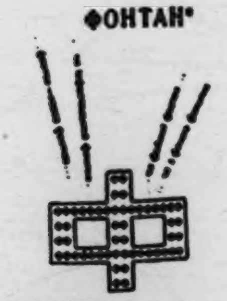


Fig. 220. Mykola Miroshnychenko.
"Fontan" ("The Fountain").

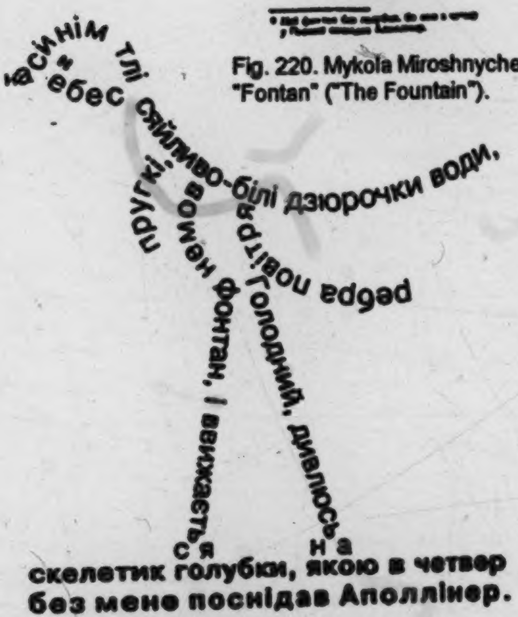

всинім тлі небес
сяйливо-білі дзюрочки води,
пругкі, немов повітря, бедра
голодний, дивлюсь на
фонтан, і ввижаєть ся
скелетик голубки, якою в четвер
без мене поснідав Аполлінер.

Fig. 219. Viktor Melnyk.
"Aktualne vydyvo" ("The Actual Vision").

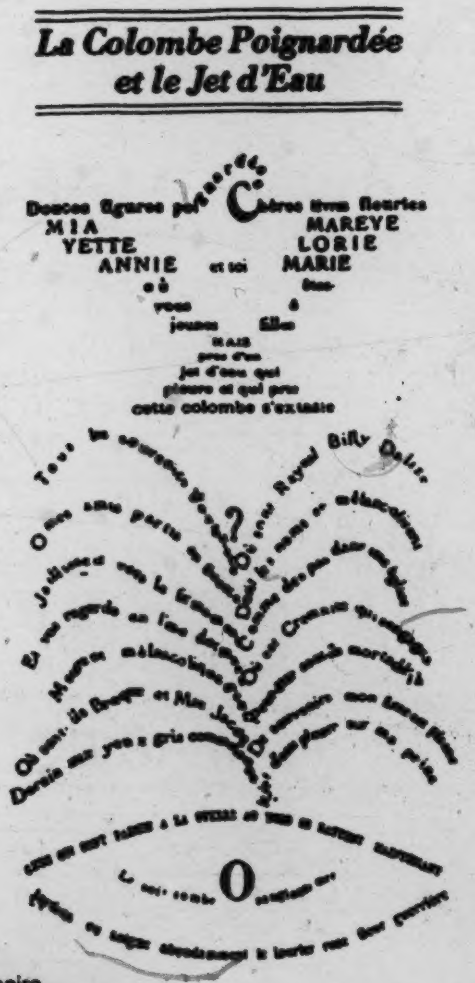
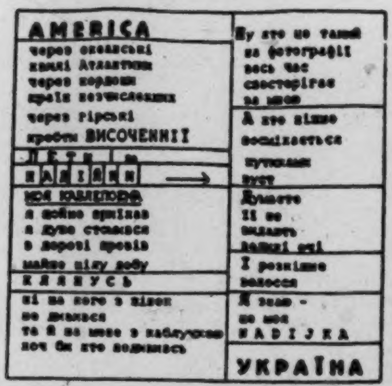

La Colombe Poignardée
et le Jet d'Eau
Douces figures poignardées
Chères lèvres fleuries
MIA
MAREYE
YETTE
LORIE
ANNIE
et toi
MARIE
où
êtes
vous
ô
jeunes
filles
MAIS
près d'un
jet d'eau qui
pleure et qui prie
cette colombe s'extasie
Tous les souvenirs de naguère
Où sont Raynal Billy Dalize
O mes amis partis en guerre
Et vos regards en l'eau dormant
Derain aux yeux gris comme l'aube
Le soir tombe
O

Fig. 221. Guillaume Apollinaire
"La Colombe Poignardée at le Jet d'Eau"
("The Stabbed Dove and the Fountain").

Fig. 222. Mykola Soroka.
"Moia kablepoema druzhuni"
("Cablepoem to My Wife").


AMERICA
через океанські
хвилі Атлантики
через кордони
країн незчисленних
через гірські
хребти ВИСОЧЕННІ
НАДІЙКИ
моя каблепоема
КЛЯНУСЬ
Ну хто це такий
на фотографії
НАДІЙКА
УКРАЇНА

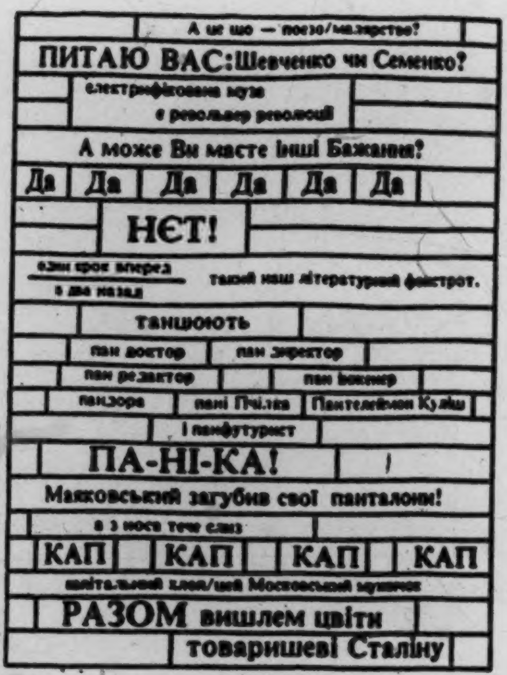

А це що — поезо/малярство?
ПИТАЮ ВАС: Шевченко чи Семенко?
електрифікована муза
є револьвер революції
А може Ви маєте інші Бажання?
Да
Да
Да
Да
Да
Да
НЄТ!
один крок вперед
і два назад
такий наш літературний фокстрот.
танцюють
пан доктор
пан директор
пан редактор
пан боксер
пані Пчілка
Пантелеймон Куліш
і панфутурист
ПА-НІ-КА!
Маяковський загубив свої панталони!
а з носа тече сльоза
КАП
КАП
КАП
КАП
РАЗОМ вишлем цвіти
товаришеві Сталіну

Fig. 223. Jars Balan. Composition.

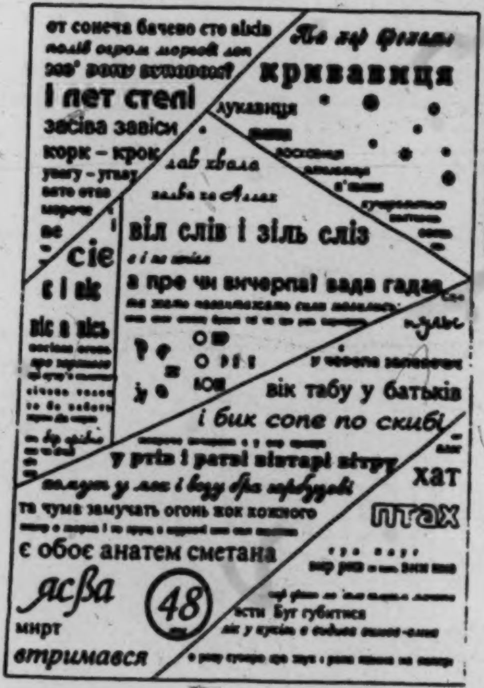

от сонеча бачено сто віків
кривавиця
І пет стелі
засіва завіси
корк – крок
віл слів і зіль сліз
вік табу у батьків
і бик сопе по скибі
хат
птах
є обоє анатем сметана
ясва
48
мирт
втримався

Fig. 224. Ivan Iov. "Avert abetky mizhzorianykh hlybyn"
("Turning away from the Alphabet of the Intercelestial Depths").

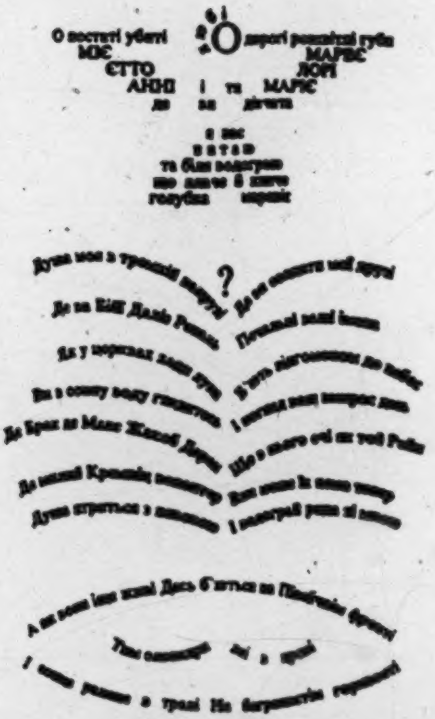

МОЄ
ЄТТО
АННІ і та МАРІЄ
?

Fig. 225. Mykola Lukash. Rendering of Apollinaires' calligram "La Colombe Poignardée at le Jet d'Eau."

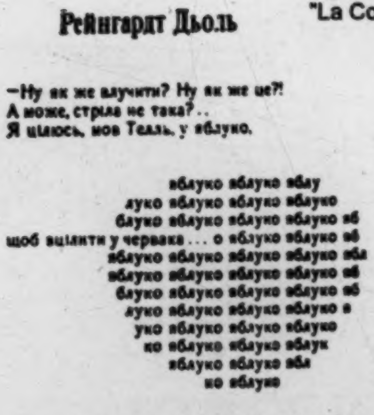

Рейнгардт Дьоль
—Ну як же влучити? Ну як же це?!
А може, стріла не така?..
Я цілюсь, мов Телль, у яблуко.
щоб вцілити у черв'яка . . . о яблуко яблуко яб

Fig. 226. Mykola Miroshnychenko. Translation from Reinhard Döhl.

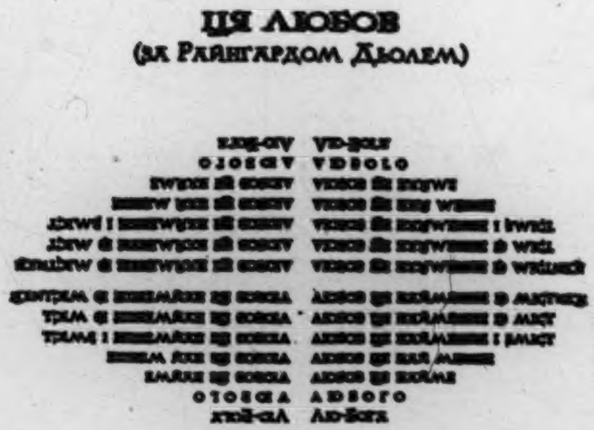

ЦЯ ЛЮБОВ
(ЗА РАЙНГАРДОМ ДЬОЛЕМ)

Fig. 227. Mykola Miroshnychenko. Translation from Reinhard Döhl.

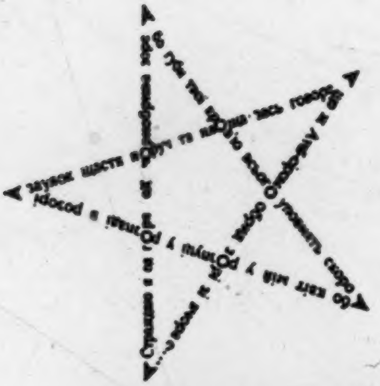


Fig. 228. Mykola Miroshnychenko.
Translation from Ataallah Makhmud-i Khusaini Atai.

кулл земна
знай обертається
щодоби круг своєї осі
люди мертві, живі – геть усі
обертаються теж круг тієї ж осі
дідусевий дідусь, та ще син його сина,
та бабусина бабця, та ж і внуччина внуця –
паралелі… проте вони десь перетнуться,
позбираються в точці якійсь воєдино
щоб з'явитись на цей білий світ,
з нього мушу невдовзі піти
як узнати: в цім світі
хто ж – прихідця
й відхідця?

Fig. 229. Mykola Miroshnychenko.
Translation from Abbas
Abdulla Gadzhaloglu.

### Nur du, Gudrun!

Ade,
Lissi, Salli, Gitte, Biggi, Sara,
Mizzi, Leila, Maia, Karin, Ina,
Jane, Lilli, Minna, Anita,
Irene, Lale, Sigi, Susan, Ines,
Liane, Lea, Lolita, Karola,
Lia, Liv, Elli, Jette, Dolli, Lis,
Babette, Nana, Ida, Nadia,
Nanette, Babsi, Lill, Odette,
Jill, Evi, Laila, Lora, Kati,
Lola, Elena, Ilse, Nina, Susi,
Gisela, Lene, Ria, Tina, Anni,
Milli, Lena, Janin, Ira, Kai,
Amalie, Lizzi, Mara, Siggi,
Betti, Gilla, Sissi, Leda!

### ОКРІМ ТЕБЕ – ЩЕБЕТ, МІРКО !

Інна,
Фана, Дара, Ляна, Аніта, Зоряна,
Сяня, Анеля, Тетяна, Мара, Таня,
Аріадна, Віра, Маруся, Леда,
Ніна, Жанна, Аліна, Ніля, Сара,
Мотя, Ліляна, Гата, Надія,
Лора,Ката, Гаяне, Рада,
Ясоня, Еля, Леся, Селя, Лея, Нюся,
Ада, Реня, Агата, Кароля,
Іда, Ната, Ганя, Ліля,
Томар, Ася, Ліна, Ніла, Анна,
Жанін, Аделя, Сура, Марі, Ванда,
Іра, Яна, Тара, Маня, Тетя,
Лена, Яня, Саня, Роза, Тіна,
Аня, Лара, Дана, Фанні !

Fig. 230. Ivan Luchuk. Palindromic poem "Okrim tebe – shchebet, Mirko!", rendering of Herbert Pfeiffer's "Nur du, Gudrun!"

Kälte
u
n
d

Schnee

d
friert Kälte e
e i
g n
Herz

Fig. 231. Ihor Tratsch.
"Kätle" ("Cold").

зимно

я

... холод сніг

е
ц т
р в
е о
с є

замерзле

Fig. 232. Ihor Tratsch.
"Kholod" ("Cold").

◆

Auf
meinem
gesplitterten
Lebensweg

spüre
ich

die
Wärme
Deines
Herzens

◆

Fig. 233. Ihor Tratsch.
"Auf meinen gesplitterten Lebensweg"
("On My Shattered Road of Life").

Herbstblumen
auf
meinem
Tisch
Herbst
in
deinem
Herz
Herbst ...
wieder
Herbst
und
Frühlingsgefühle
wie
ein
Streicheln
der
Liebe
—
heilige
Musik
—
aber
Herbst
im
Land
mein
letzter
Herbst
—
der
Tanz
der
letzten
Blätter
erwärmt
Geist
und
Seele
—
Herbst
—
immer
wieder
dieser
verrückte
Herbst
—

Fig. 234. Ihor Tratsch.
"Herbstblumen" ("Autumnal Flowers").

Fig. 235. Ihor Tratsch. "Ia shukaiu Ukrainu v Evropi" ("I Am Looking for Ukraine in Europe").

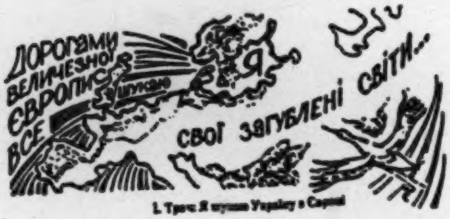
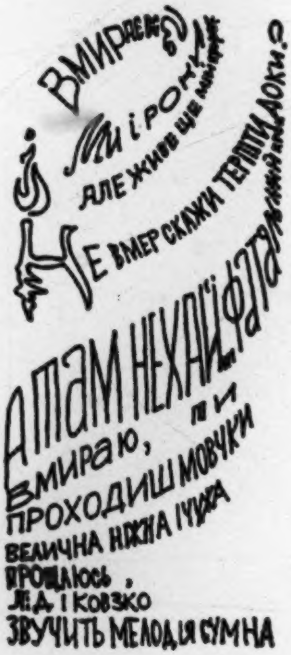

Дорогами
величезної
Європи
все
шукаю
я
свої загублені світи...
І. Трач. Я шукаю Україну в Європі

Fig. 236. Ihor Tratsch. "Vmyraie vse" (Everything Dies").


Вмирає все
ми і роки
але живе ще
Не вмер скажи терпи доки?
А там нехай фатальний
вмираю, ти
проходиш мовчки
величина ніжна
прощаюсь,
лід і ковзко
звучить мелодія сумна

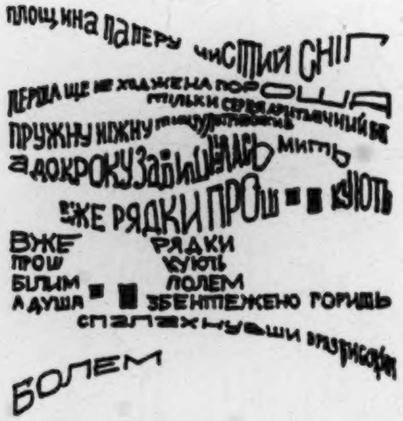

площина паперу чистий сніг
перша ще не ходжена пороша
тільки
пружну ніжну
а до кроку
мить
вже рядки прош
вже
прош
білим
а душа
рядки
кують
полем
збентежено горить
спалахнувши
болем

Fig. 237. Ihor Tratsch. "Ploshchyna paperu" ("Paper Space").

Fig. 238. Ihor Tratsch.
"Vsmikhalasia kalyna za viknom"
("The Viburnum Laughed Outside My Window").

Всміхалася

**калина за вікном**

**на**

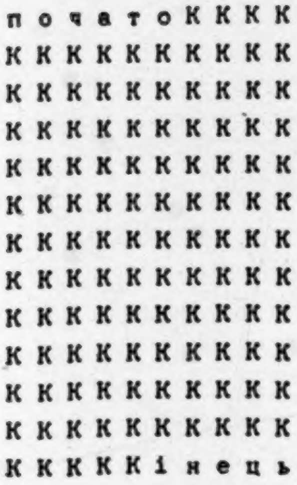
**жаль**

**то**

**мій**

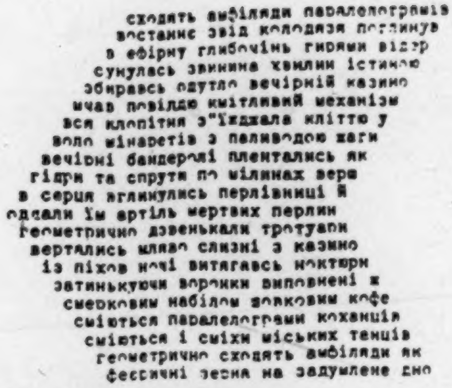
**печальний**

**сон**



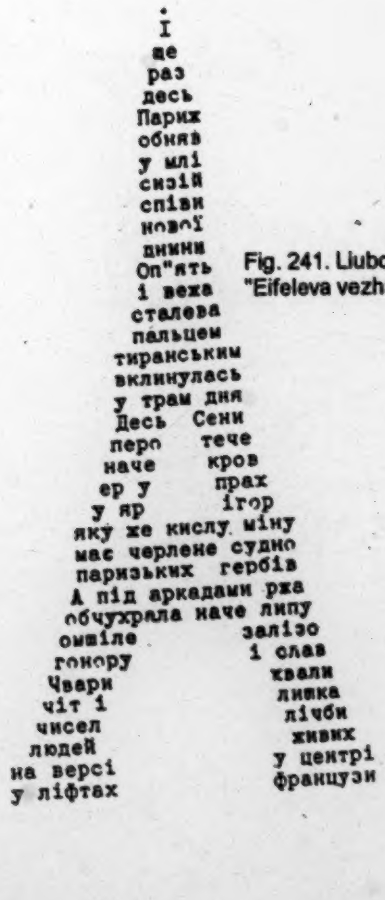
п о ч а т о К К К К
К К К К К К К К К К
К К К К К К К К К К
К К К К К К К К К К
К К К К К К К К К К
К К К К К К К К К К
К К К К К К К К К К
К К К К К К К К К К
К К К К К К К К К К
К К К К К К К К К К
К К К К К К К К К К
К К К К К К К К К К
К К К К К і н е ц ь

Fig. 239. Vilen Barsky.
"Poema pro K" ("The Poem About K").



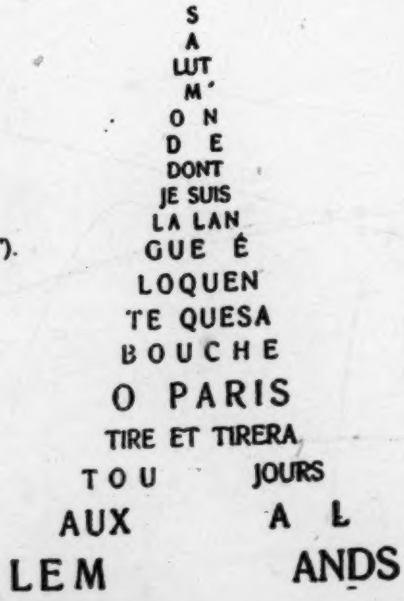
сходять амфілади паралелограмів
востаннє звід колодязя поглинув
в ефірну глибочінь гирями відер
сунулась звинина хвилин істиною
збиравсь одутло вечірній казино
мчав повільно квітливий механізм
вся клопітна з"їждала кліттю у
воло мінаретів з поливодою жаги
вечірні бандеролі плентались як
гідри та спрути по мілинах вере
в серця вглинулись перлівниці й
оддали їм артіль мертвих перлин
геометрично дзвенькали тротуари
вертались мляво слизні з казино
із піхов ночі витягавсь ноктюрн
затинькуючи воронки виповнені ж
смерковим набілом вовковим кофе
сміються паралелограми коханців
сміються і сміхи міських тенців
геометрично сходять амфілади як
фессичні зерна на задумлене дно

Fig. 240. Liubomyr Hoseiko.
"Skhodiat amfilady paralelohramiv"
("The Succession of Parallelograms Rise").



І
ще
раз
десь
Париж
обняв
у млі
сизій
співи
нової
днини
Оп"ять
і вежа
сталева
пальцем
тиранським
вклинулась
у трам дня
Десь Сени
перо тече
наче кров
ер у прах
у яр ігор
яку же кислу міну
має червлене судно
паризьких гербів
А під аркадами ржа
обчухрала наче липу
оміле залізо
гонору і слав
Чвари хвали
чіт і линяка
чисел лічби
людей живих
на версі у центрі
у ліфтах французи

Fig. 241. Liubomyr Hoseiko.
"Eifeleva vezha" ("Eiffel Tower").



S
A
LUT
M'
O N
D E
DONT
JE SUIS
LA LAN
GUE É
LOQUEN
TE QUESA
BOUCHE
O PARIS
TIRE ET TIRERA
TOU JOURS
AUX A L
LEM ANDS

Fig. 242. Guillaume Apollinaire.
"2e Cannonier Conducteur" ("2d Gunnery Driver").

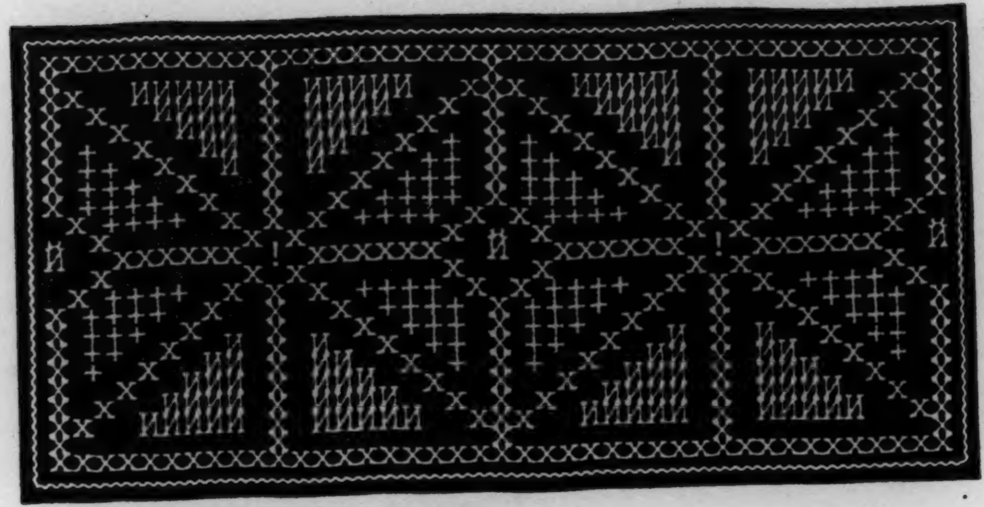


Fig. 243. Jars Balan. "Hutsulam" ("To the Hutsuls").

Fig. 244 a-i. Brian Dedora. "vin vorukhnuvsiz he moved corrái sé."

Agus sa leaba caol sin
Cuilteach slithneach in aice a chorpán
Mhothaigh sé féin ag corraí
Agus ag fáscadh go dtí an tocht caol sin
Chun an tinneas sin a cheansáidh
Nach mhotháigh caoiseach fadó
Ach ag fás go nímhneach anois
Le grian an áit imigceinúil sin
Táithneamhach in aghaidh an cloch fuar
Agus moirgacht an tuath seo
Corraí sé

і в тому вузькому ліжку
ковдра шорстка об тіло
він відчув що ворушиться
притиснувшись до благенького матраца
щоб угамувати той біль
який в минулому
був майже невідчутний
а тепер пронизував
жарою того далекого місця
яскравий на холодному камінні
й сірізні цього родинного місця
він ворухнувся

Agus sa leaba caol sin
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

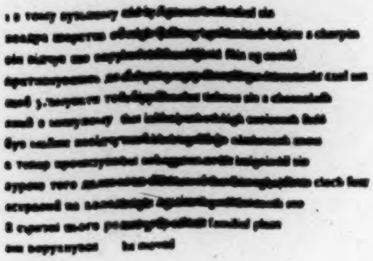
і в тому вузькому ліжку
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] до благенького [illegible]
[illegible] той біль
[illegible]
був [illegible]
а тепер [illegible]
[illegible] того далекого [illegible]
[illegible] на холодному [illegible]
в [illegible] свого рідного [illegible]
він [illegible]

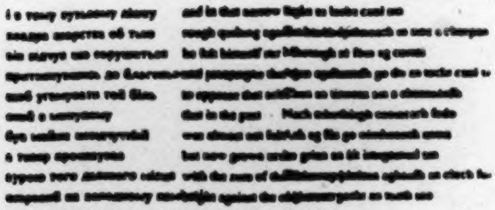
Agus sa leaba caol sin
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

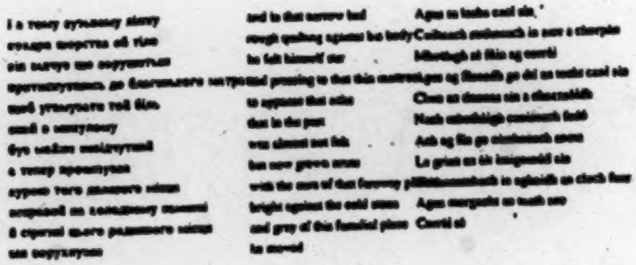
і в тому вузькому ліжку
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] до благенького [illegible]
[illegible] той біль
[illegible]
був [illegible]
а тепер [illegible]
[illegible] того далекого [illegible]
[illegible] на холодному [illegible]
в [illegible] свого рідного [illegible]
він [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]







| | | |
|---|---|---|
| і в тому вузькому ліжку | and in that narrow bed | Agus sa leaba caol sin |
| ковдра шорстка об тіло | rough quilting against his body | Cuilteach stithneach in aice a chorpán |
| він відчув що ворушиться | he felt himself stir | Mhotháigh sé féin ag corraí |
| притиснувшись до благенького матраца | and pressing to that thin mattress | Agus ag fáscadh go dtí an tocht caol sin |
| щоб угамувати той біль | to appease that ache | Chun an tinneas sin a cheansáidh |
| який в минулому | that in the past | Nach mhotháigh caniseach fadó |
| був майже невідчутний | was almost not felt | Ach ag fás go nímhneach anois |
| а тепер пронизував | but now grown acute | Le grian an áit imigeinúil sin |
| аурою того далекого місця | with the aura of that faraway place | Táithneamhach in aghaidh an cloch fuar |
| яскравий на холодному камінні | bright against the cold stone | Agus morgacht an tuath seo |
| й сірizні цього родинного місця | and gray of this familial place | Corraí sé |
| він ворухнувся | he moved | |

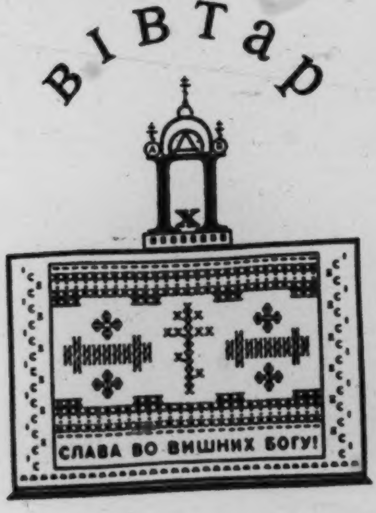

ВІВТар
X
СЛАВА ВО ВИШНИХ БОГУ!

Fig. 245. Jars Balan.
"Vivtar" (The Altar").

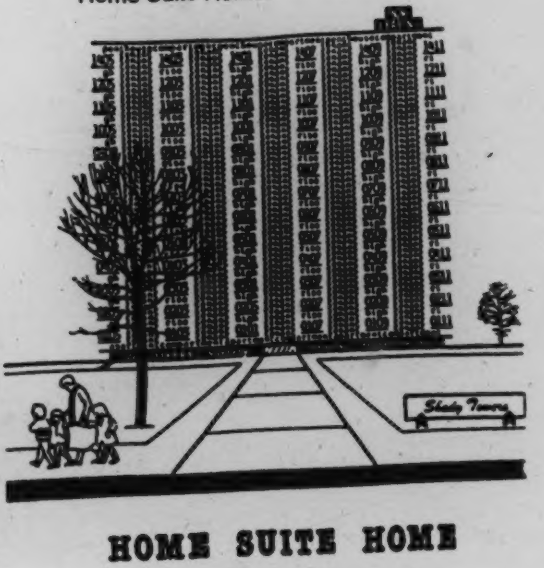

Shady Towers
HOME SUITE HOME

Fig. 246. Jars Balan.
"Home Suite Home."

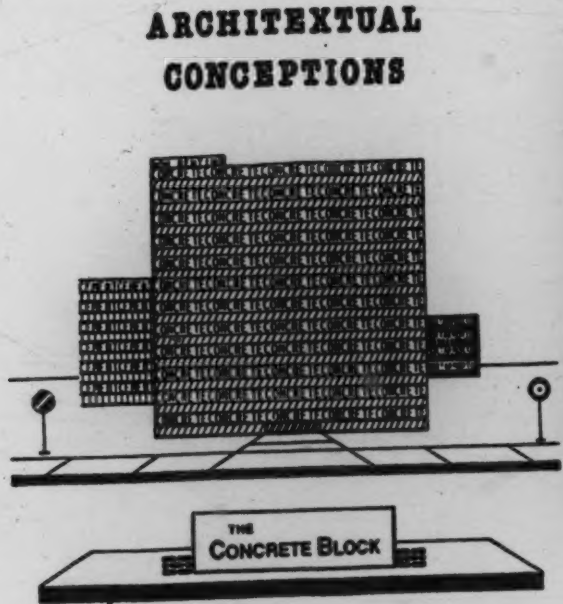

ARCHITEXTUAL
CONCEPTIONS
THE
CONCRETE BLOCK

Fig. 247. Jars Balan.
"Architextual Conceptions: The Concrete Block."

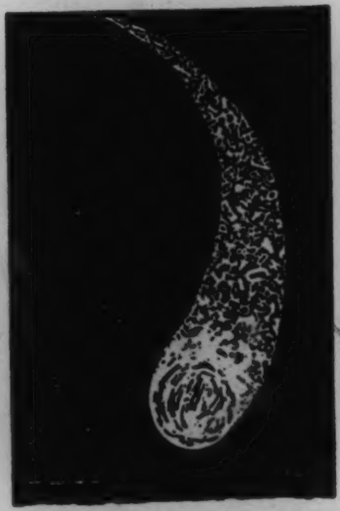


Fig. 248. Jars Balan.
"Blyskucha ideia" ("A Brilliant Idea").

HEART
-HEAT
ART

Fig. 249. Jars Balan.
"Heart – Heat =Art."

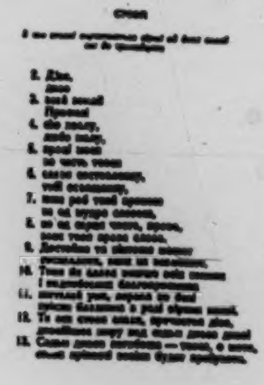


Fig. 250. Ivan Velychkovskyi.
"Stovp" ("Column").

**Temple song**

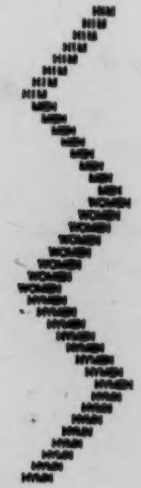

HIM
MEN
WOMEN
HYMEN

Fig. 251. Jars Balan.
"Temple Song."

**Bored meeting (minutes)**

---

Yack yack yack yack
yack yack yack yack
yackety - yack yack yack
yaw - w - w - w - w - n . . .

Fig. 252. Jars Balan.
"Bored meeting (minutes)."

**Lecture notes**

---

Tick
talk
tick
talk
tick
talk
tick

Fig. 253. Jars Balan.
"Lecture notes."

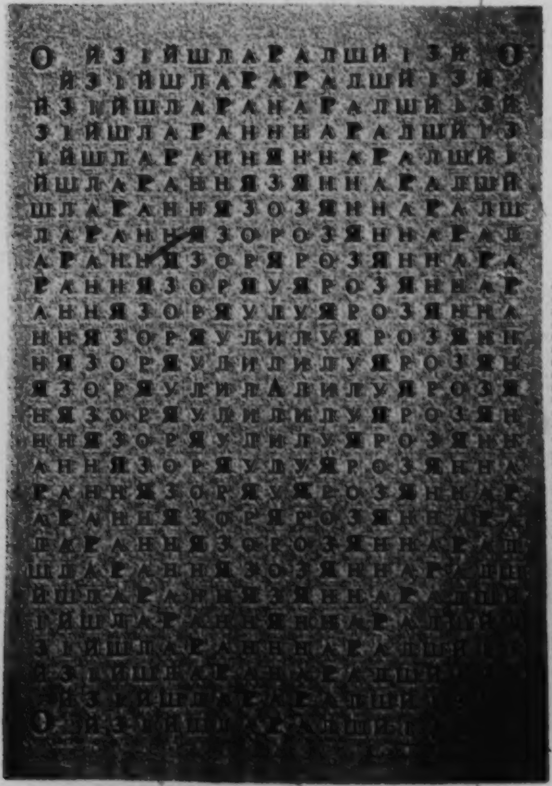


Fig. 254. Jars Balan.
"Oi ziishla rannia zoria, alyluia"
(Oh, the Early Star Has Risen, Alleluia").

**Sh-h!**
**(the secret)**

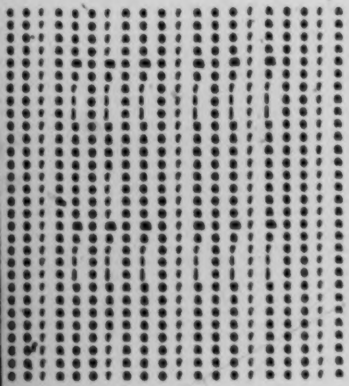


Fig. 255. Jars Balan.
"Sh-h! (the secret)".

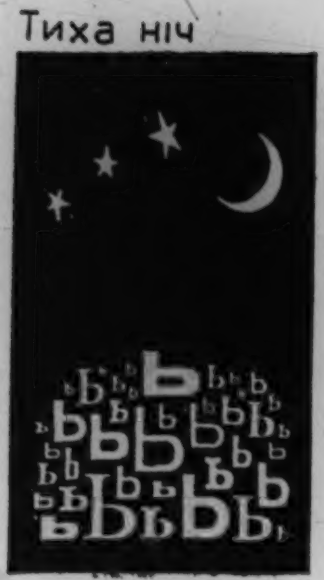


Fig. 256. Jars Balan.
"Tykha nich" ("Silent Night").

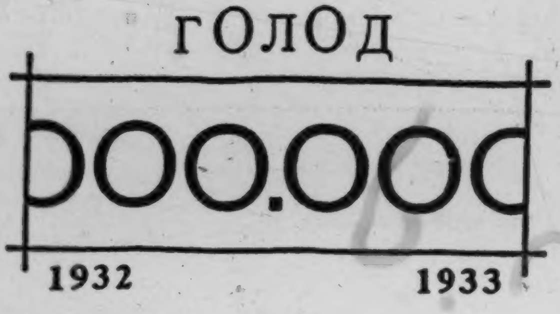

ГОЛОД
1932
1933

Fig. 257. Jars Balan. "Holod" ("Famine").

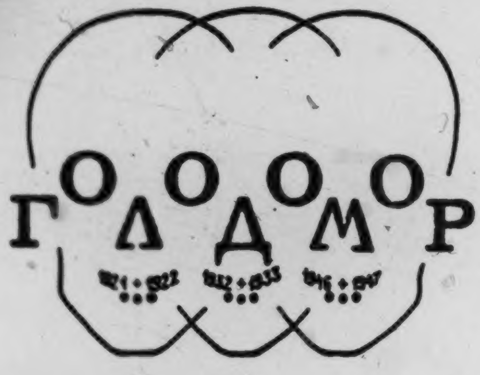

ГОЛОДОМОР
1921 + 1922
1932 + 1933
1946 + 1947

Fig. 258. Myroslav Korol.
"Holodomor" ("Famine").

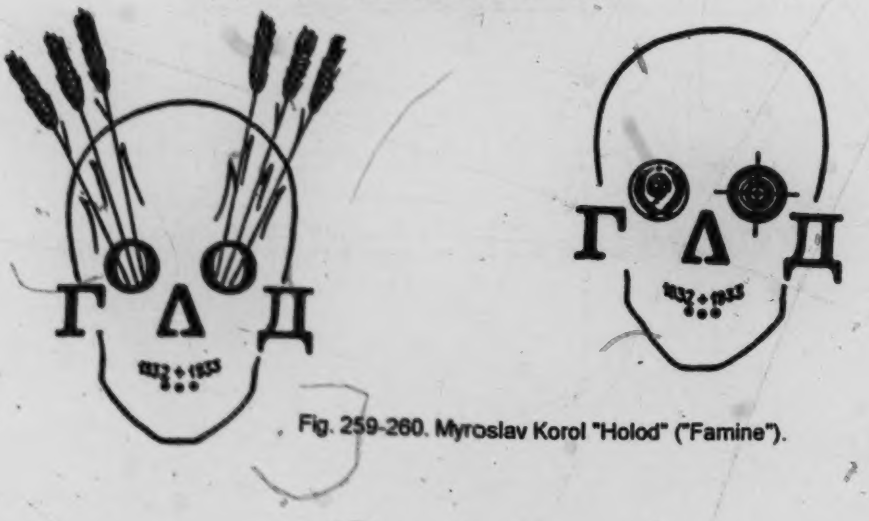
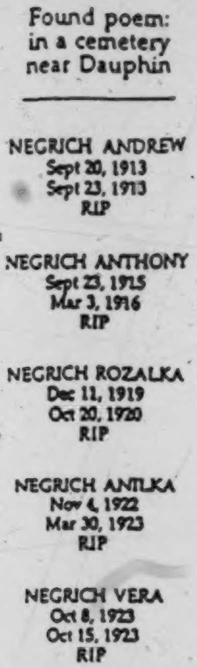

Г Л Д
1932 + 1933
Г Л Д
1932 + 1933

Fig. 259-260. Myroslav Korol "Holod" ("Famine").



Found poem:
in a cemetery
near Dauphin

NEGRICH ANDREW
Sept 20, 1913
Sept 23, 1913
RIP

NEGRICH ANTHONY
Sept 23, 1915
Mar 3, 1916
RIP

NEGRICH ROZALKA
Dec 11, 1919
Oct 20, 1920
RIP

NEGRICH ANTLKA
Nov 4, 1922
Mar 30, 1923
RIP

NEGRICH VERA
Oct 8, 1923
Oct 15, 1923
RIP

Fig. 261. Jars Balan.
"Found poem:
in a cemetery
near Dauphin."

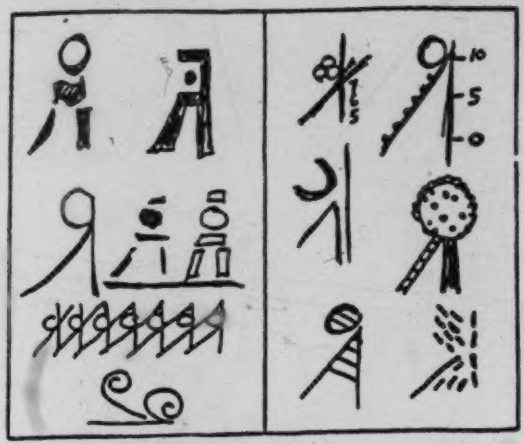


Fig. 262. Jars Balan.
Page from *Autobiografika* (*Autobiographica*).

Fig. 263. Jars Balan.
"Ia poet i panguturist."
(I Am a Poet and a Panfuturist").

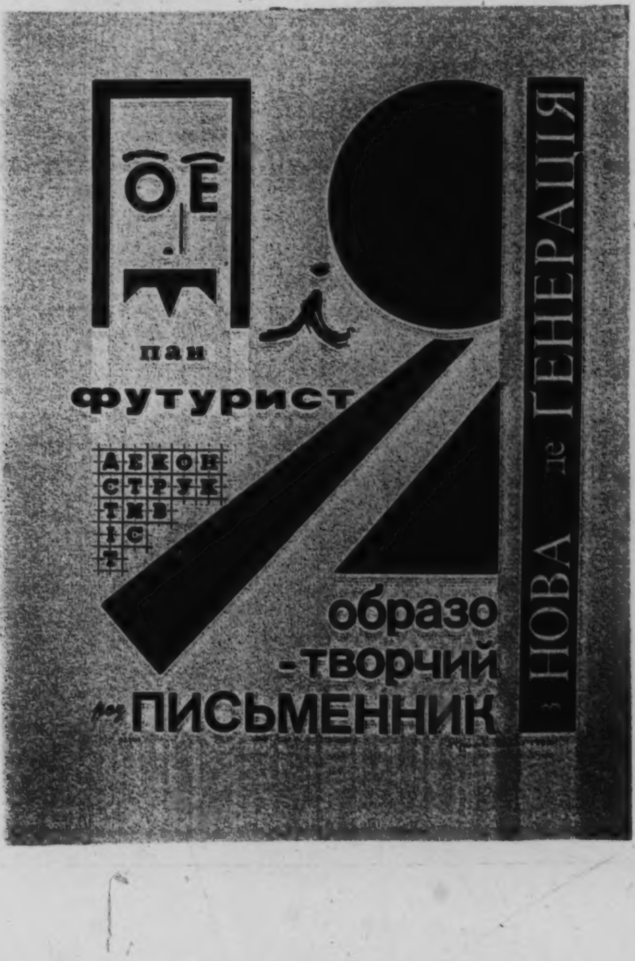
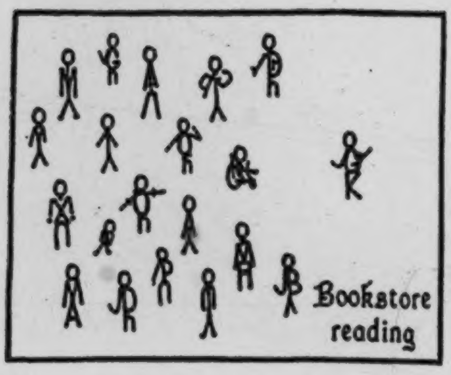

ОЕ
і
пан
футурист
ДЕКОН
СТРУК
ТИВ
ІС
Т
образо
-творчий
ПИСЬМЕННИК
з НОВА де ГЕНЕРАЦІЯ

Fig. 264. Jars Balan.
"Teen Jam."


Bookstore
reading

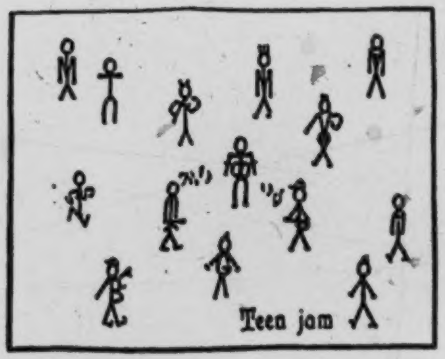


Fig. 265. Jars Balan.
"Bookstore Reading."

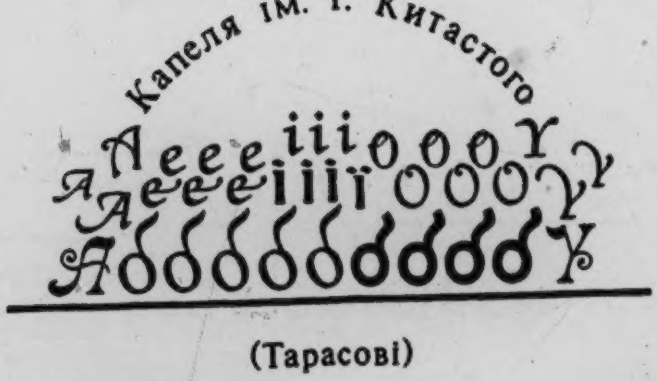

Капеля ім. Г. Китастого
(Тарасові)

Fig. 266. Jars Balan.
"Kapelia im. N. Kytastoho"
("The H. Kytasty Ensemble").

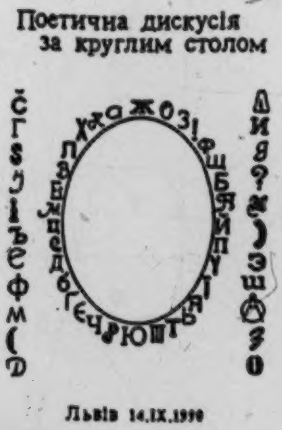

Поетична дискусія
за круглим столом
Львів 14.IX.1990

Fig. 267. Jars Balan.
"Poetychna dyskusia za krukhlym stolom"
("Round Table Poetic Discussion").

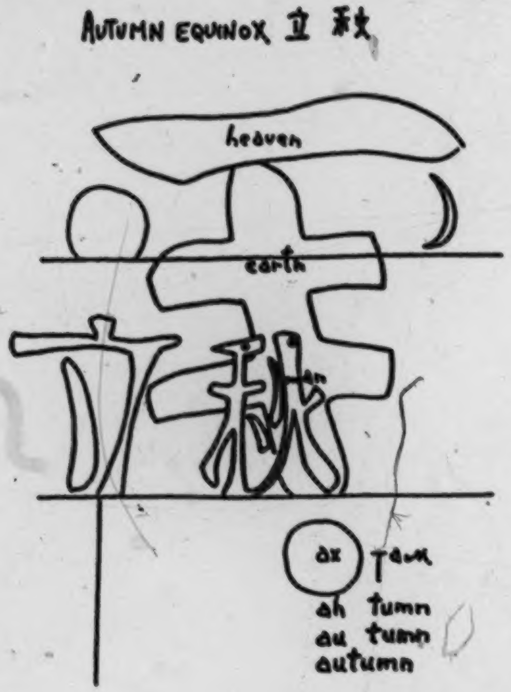

AUTUMN EQUINOX 立 秋
heaven
earth
立秋
ax
tam
ah tumn
au tumn
autumn

Fig. 268. Andrei Suknaski.
"Autumn Equinox."

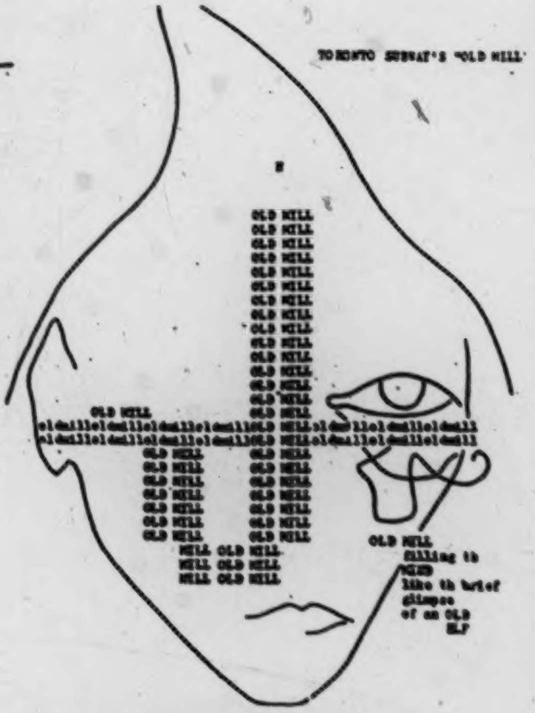

TORONTO SUBWAY'S 'OLD MILL'
OLD MILL
oldmilloldmilloldmill
OLD MILL
filling th
MIND
like th brief
glimpse
of an OLD
ELF

Fig. 269. Andrei Suknaski.
"Toronto's Subway 'Old Mill'."

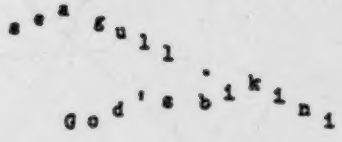

sea gull
God's bikini

Fig. 270. Andrei Suknaski. "Sea Gull – God's Bikini," translation of Andrei Voznesenskii's concrete poem.

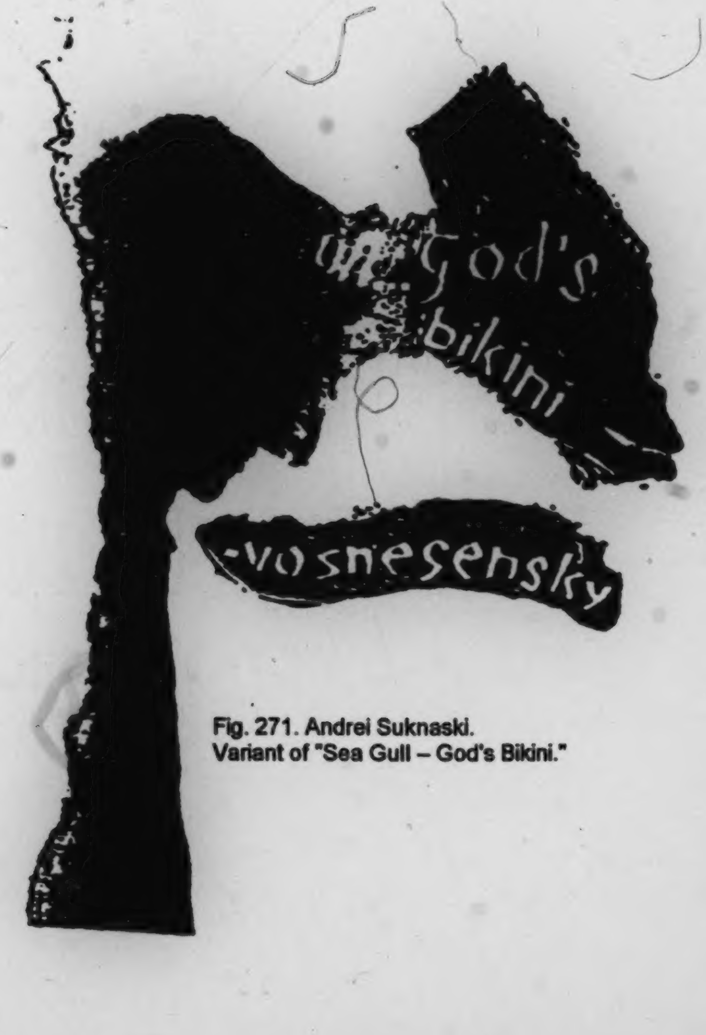

God's
bikini
-vosnesensky

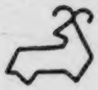
Fig. 271. Andrei Suknaski.
Variant of "Sea Gull – God's Bikini."

**Kosmach**

***home of valentyn moroz***
***in moscow's vladimir prison no. 2***

**Kosmach**
**where dream of home**
**lies**
**curled**

**in horns**
**of *baran***



**ram**
**gracing *pysanka***

**dream of home**
**contained**

**in the carpathian**
**ram**
**hutsul symbol**

**for leadership**
**and strength**
**in face of**
**adversity**

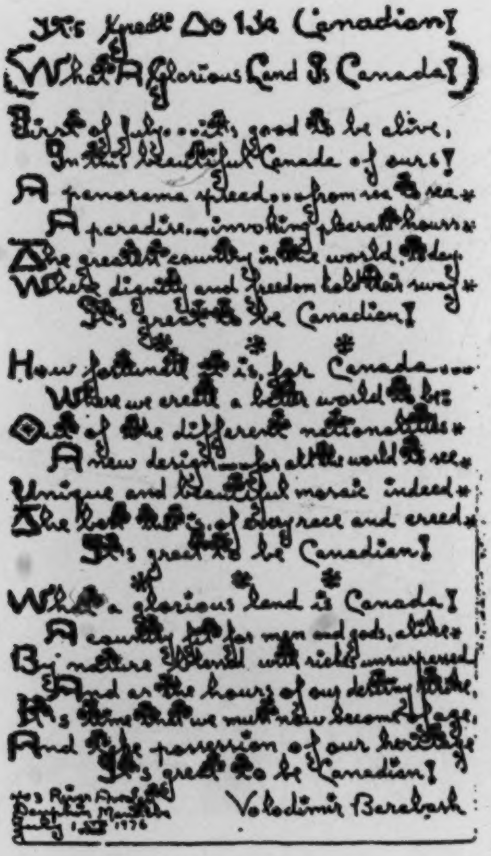
Fig. 272. Andrei Suknaski.
"Kosmach."

**Hurakan**
***ukrainian sound poem in spring (for sonia sorestad)***

***viter viie***
***viter viie***
**wind blowing**
**wind blowing**
**wind blowing**
**wind blowing**
***viter viie***
***viter viie***
**HURAKAN!**

**kan**
**kan**
**gone cities**
**kan**
**kan**
**gone the trees**
**kan**
**kan**
**gone**

Fig. 273. Andrei Suknaski.
"Hurakan."



It's Great To Be Canadian!
(What A Glorious Land Is Canada!)

First of July... it's good to be alive,
In this beautiful Canada of ours!
A panorama spreads... from sea to sea*
A paradise... invoking pleasant hours*
The greatest country in the world, today
Where dignity and freedom hold their sway*
It's great to be Canadian!

* * *

How fortunate it is, for Canada...
Where we create a better world to be:
Out of the different nationalities*
A new design... for all the world to see*
Unique and beautiful mosaic indeed*
The best traits of every race and creed*
It's great to be Canadian!

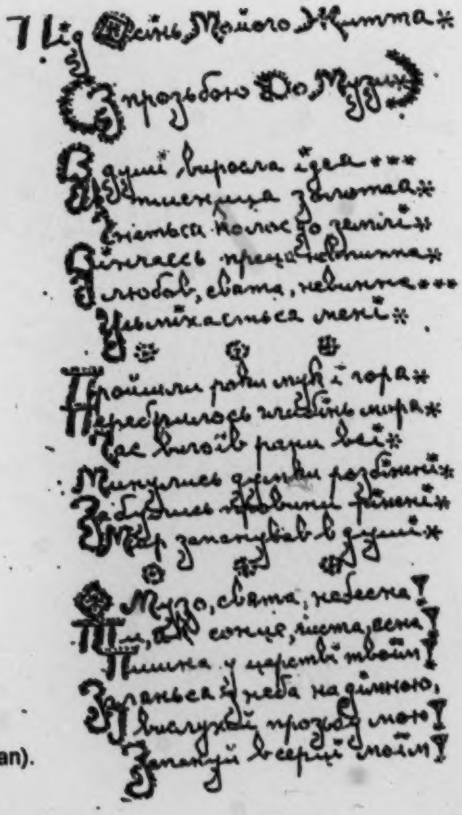
* * *

What a glorious land is Canada!
A country fit for men and gods, alike*
By nature blessed with riches unsurpassed,
And as the hours of our destiny strike,
It's time that we must now become of age,
And take possession of our heritage
It's great to be Canadian!

[illegible]3 River Ave.
Dauphin, Manitoba
July 1, 1976

Volodimir Barabash

Fig. 274. Volodimir Barabash.
Composition in a quaint script (in English).



Пісень Мойого Життя*
З просьбою До Музи

В душі виросла ідея***
[illegible] золота*
[illegible] [illegible] до землі*
[illegible] [illegible]*
Любов, свята, невинна***
Усміхається мені*

* * *

Пройшли роки муки і горя*
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]*
Час вигоїв рани всі*
Минулись [illegible] [illegible]*
Забулись [illegible] [illegible]*
Мир запанував в душі*

* * *

Музо, свята, небесна!
Ти, що сонце, мета, весна!
Пишна у царстві твоїм!
Зглянься з неба наді мною,
І вислухай прозьбу мою!
Запануй в серці моїм!

Fig. 275. Volodimir Barabash.
Composition in a quaint script (in Ukrainian).

Ніччю виповзав зі своєї потайбічної криївки
безокий павук
і снував у темряві
кола
        напруженої
                        думки
Часом
        насторожено
                        зупинявся
і
була мертвецька
Т - И - Ш - А
                        інколи
знову раптом
стрибав
т
о
р
ч
а
к
а
вниз
і повиснувши на п
                        а
                        в
                        у
                        т
                        и
                        н
                        ц
                        і
                  г         я
                   о       с
                    й     в
                      да
маятником
          співчутливого
      Р   Г   Т
        Е   О   У

## APPENDIX II

## GLOSSARY[1]

**Alphabet verse:** a poem in which sucessive lines or stanzas begin with successive letters of an alphabet.

**Acrostic:** a poems in which the initial letters of the lines line up to make an inscription.

***Carmen gryphicum*:** a poem in which some letters are read according to their names in Old Church Slavonic.

**Cabalistic poem:** a poem in which each letter of an alphabet is assigned a numerical value.

***Carmen antitheticum*:** a poem, in which words are to read in different directions in order to obtain different meanings.

***Carmen gryphicum*:** a poem in which some letters are read according their names in Old Church Slavonic.

**Chronogram:** a poem in which certain letters (typicaly capitalized) are read as numerals giving date.

**Coordinated poem:** a poem in which the second line goes with both the first and the third ones.

**Correlative verse:** a poem in which words are correlated on the basis of the verbal conceit.

**Echo-poem:** a poem in which the last syllable is meant to be repeated to form a new chain of meaning.

**Labyrinth:** a geometrically shaped poem which can be read in several ways.

**Leonine verse:** a poem which has an internal rhyme scheme.

**Mesoctic:** a poem in which some of the letters inside the poem line up to form a word or a phrase.

**Palindrome:** a poem which reads alike backward and forward. May be literal, verbal and contradictory.

**Protean (Proteus) poem:** a poem in which lines employ the same words in various word order.

**Pythagorean poem:** a poem shaped as a letter Y.

**Telestic:** a poem in which the terminal letters make an inscription.

**Videopalindrome:** a palindrome with explicit or intensified optical effects.

[1] The following sources were used for the compilation of the Glossary:

Drag, C.L. *Russian Word-Play Poetry from Simeon Polotskii to Derzhavin* (London: London School of Slavonic and East European Studies, 1993).

Higgins, Dick. *Pattern Poetry: Guide to an Unknown Literature* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1987).

Preminger, Alex, and Brogan, T.V.F. *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (New York: MJF Books, 1993).